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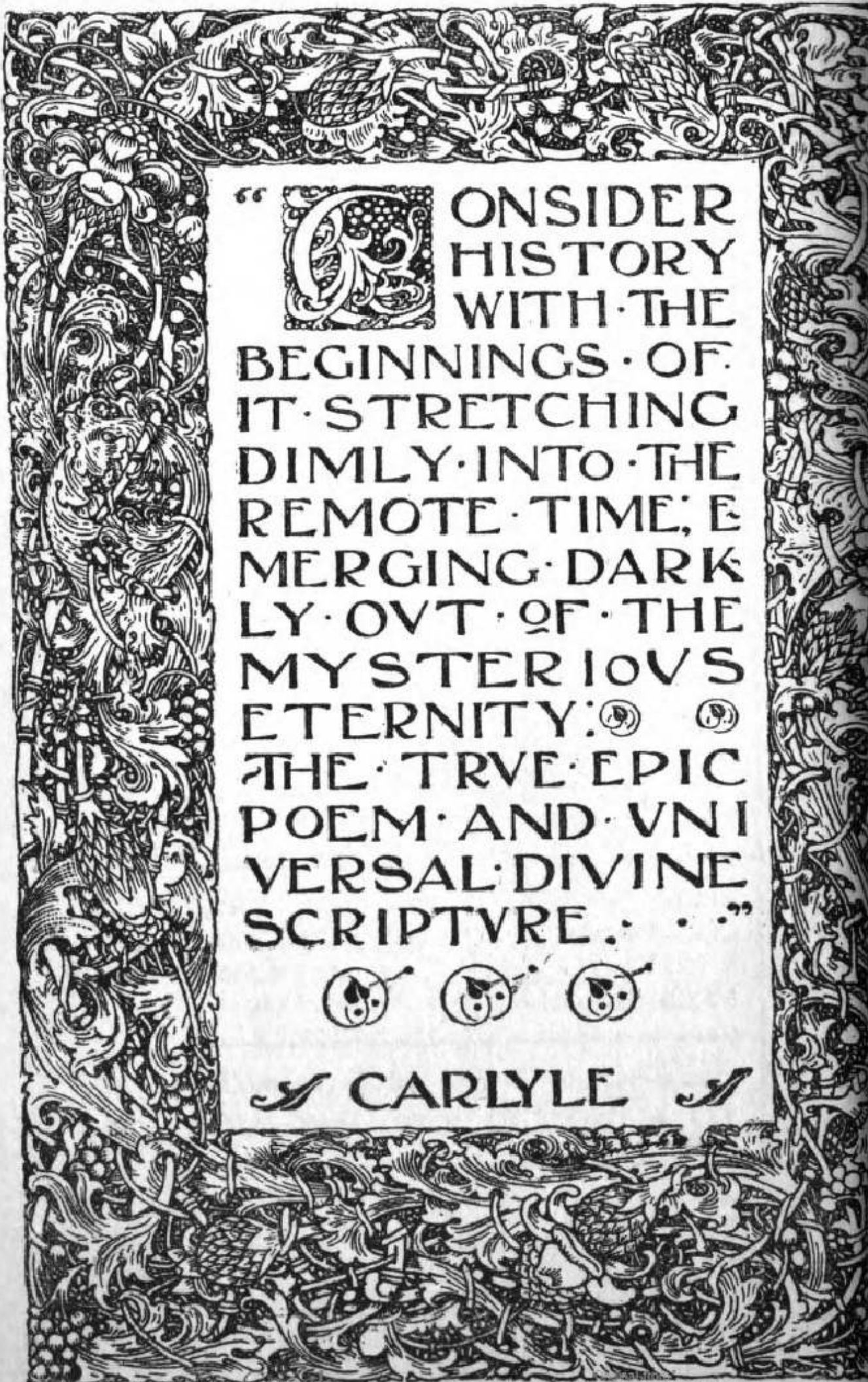
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✓ CARLYLE ✓

THE REIGN *of*
HENRY *& the*
EIGHTH *by*
JAMES ANTHONY
FROUDE . . .
VOLUME II.



LONDON & TORONTO
PUBLISHED BY J. M. DENT
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BY E. P. DUTTON & CO

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FIRST ISSUE OF THIS EDITION . 1909
REPRINTED . . . 1912, 1925

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

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HENRY VIII

CHAPTER VIII

THE IRISH REBELLION

"THE Pander ¹ sheweth, in the first chapter of his book, called *Salus Populi*, that the holy woman, Brigitta, used to inquire of her good angel many questions of secrets divine; and among all other she inquired, "Of what Christian land was most souls damned?" The angel shewed her a land in the west part of the world. She inquired the cause why? The angel said, for there is most continual war, root of hate and envy, and of vices contrary to charity; and without charity the souls cannot be saved. And the angel did shew to her the lapse of the souls of Christian folk of that land, how they fell down into hell, as thick as any hail showers. And pity thereof moved the Pander to conceive his said book, as in the said chapter plainly doth appear; for after his opinion, this [Ireland] is the land that the angel understood; for there is no land in this world of so continual war within itself; ne of so great shedding of Christian blood; ne of so great robbing, spoiling, preying, and burning; ne of so great wrongful extortion continually, as Ireland. Wherefore it cannot be denied by very estimation of man but that the angel did understand the land of Ireland." ²

Nine hundred years had passed away since the vision of the Holy Brigitta, and four hundred since the custody of the unfortunate country had been undertaken by the most orderly nation in the world; yet, at the close of all those centuries, "it could not be denied by very estimation of man" that poor Irish souls were still descending, thick as hail showers, into the general

¹ "Panderus, or the author of a book, *De Salute Populi*, flourished in the reigns of Edward IV., Edward V., Richard III., and Henry VII.; perhaps also in the reign of Henry VIII."—SIR JAMES WARE, *Writers of Ireland*, p. 90.

² State of Ireland, and plan for its reformation, 1515: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 11.

abyss of worthlessness. The Pander's satire upon the English enterprise was a heavy one.

When the wave of the Norman invasion first rolled across St. George's Channel, the success was as easy and appeared as complete as William's conquest of the Saxons. There was no unity of purpose among the Irish chieftains, no national spirit which could support a sustained resistance. The country was open and undefended,¹ and after a few feeble struggles the contest ceased. Ireland is a basin, the centre a fertile undulating plain, the edges a fringe of mountains that form an almost unbroken coast line. Into these highlands the Irish tribes were driven, where they were allowed to retain a partial independence, under condition of paying tribute; the Norman immigrants dividing among themselves the inheritance of the dispossessed inhabitants.² Strongbow and his companions became the feudal sovereigns of the island, holding their estates under the English crown. The common law of England was introduced; the king's writ passed current from the Giant's Causeway to Cape Clear;³ and if the leading Norman families had remained on the estates which they had conquered, or if those who did remain had retained the character which they brought with them, the entire country would, in all likelihood, have settled down obediently, and at length willingly, under a rule which it would have been without power to resist.

An expectation so natural was defeated by two causes, alike

¹ Some men have the opinion that this land is harder to be reformed now than it was to be conquered at the first Conquest; considering that Irishmen have more hardiness and policy and war, and more arms and artillery than they had at the Conquest. At that time there was not in all Ireland, but of cities, five Castles ne Piles, and now there be five hundred Castles and Piles.—BARON FINGLAS's *Breviate of Ireland*, written circa 1535. HARRIS's *Hibernica*, p. 88.

² In every of the said five portions, Ulster, Connaught, Leinster, South Munster, and West Munster, that was conquered by King Henry Fitz-Empress, [there were] left under tribute certain Irishmen of the principal blood of the Irish nation, that were before the Conquest inhabitants within every of the said portions; as in Leinster, the Cavanaghs of the blood of M'Morrough, sometime king of the same; in South Munster, the M'Carties, of the blood of the Carties, sometime kings of Cork; in the other portions of Munster, west of the river Shannon (Clare), where O'Brien is, which was never conquered in obedience to the king's laws, O'Brien and his blood have continued there still, which O'Brien gave tribute to King Henry Fitz-Empress, and to his heirs, by the space of one hundred years. In Connaught was left under tribute certain of the blood of O'Connor, sometime king of the same; certain of the Kellies, and others. In Ulster were left certain of the Neales, of the blood of the O'Neale. In Meath were left certain of the blood of O'Melaghlin, sometime king of the same; and divers others of Irish nations.—BARON FINGLAS's *Breviate*. HARRIS, p. 83.

³ Thomond seems to have been an exception.

unforeseen and perplexing. The Northern nations, when they overran the Roman Empire, were in search of homes; and they subdued only to colonise. The feudal system bound the noble to the lands which he possessed; and a theory of ownership of estates, as consisting merely in the receipt of rents from other occupants, was alike unheard of in fact, and repugnant to the principles of feudal society. To Ireland belongs, among its other misfortunes, the credit of having first given birth to absentees. The descendants of the first invaders preferred to regard their inheritance, not as a theatre of duty on which they were to reside, but as a possession which they might farm for their individual advantage. They managed their properties by agents, as sources of revenue, leasing them even among the Irish themselves; and the tenantry, deprived of the supporting presence of their lords, and governed only in a merely mercenary spirit, transferred back their allegiance to the exiled chiefs of the old race.¹ This was one grave cause of the English failure; but serious as it was, it would not have sufficed alone to explain

¹ See FINGLAS'S *Breviate*. 23 Hen. VI. cap. 9: *Irish Statute Book*. 28 Hen. VIII. cap. 3: *Ibid*. It seems in many cases to have been the result of accident, Irish lands descending to heiresses who married into English families. In other instances, forfeited estates were granted by the crown to English favourites. The receiving rents, however, even though by unwilling absentees, was treated as a crime by Henry VIII.; and English noblemen, to whom estates in Ireland had fallen, either by marriage or descent, on which they were unable to reside, were expected to grant such estates to other persons who were able to reside upon them, and willing. The wording of the Act of Absentees, passed in 1536, is very remarkable, "Forasmuch as it is notorious and manifest that this the king's land of Ireland, heretofore being inhabited, and in due obedience and subjection unto the king's most noble progenitors, hath principally grown unto ruin, dissolution, rebellion, and decay, by occasion that great dominions, lands, and possessions within the same, as well by the king's grants as by course of inheritance and otherwise have descended to noblemen of the realm of England, who having the same, demouring within the said realm of England . . . taking the profits of their said lands and possessions for a season, without provision making for any defence or keeping thereof in good order . . . in their absence, and by their negligence have suffered the wild Irishrie, being mortal and natural enemies to the Kings of England, to enter and hold the same without resistance; the conquest and winning whereof in the beginning not only cost the king's noble progenitors charges inestimable, but also those to whom the land was given, then and many years after abiding within the said land, nobly and valiantly defended the same, and kept such tranquillity and good order, as the Kings of England had due subjection of the inhabitants thereof, and the laws were obeyed . . . and after the gift or descent of the lands to the persons aforesaid, they and their heirs absented themselves out of the said land of Ireland, not pondering nor regarding the preservation thereof . . . the King's Majesty that now is, intending the reformation of the said land, to licence that the like shall not ensue hereafter, with the consent of his parliament," pronounces FORFEITED the estates of all absentee proprietors, and their right and title gone.

the full extent of the evil. Some most powerful families rooted themselves in the soil, and never forsook it; the Geraldines, of Munster and Kildare; the Butlers, of Kilkenny; the De Burghs, the Birminghams, the De Courcies, and many others. If these had been united among themselves, or had retained their allegiance to England, their influence could not have been long opposed successfully. Their several principalities would have formed separate centres of civilisation; and the strong system of order would have absorbed and superseded the most obstinate resistance which could have been offered by the scattered anarchy of the Celts.

Unfortunately, the materials of good were converted into the worst instruments of evil. If an objection had been raised to the colonisation of America, or to the conquest of India, on the ground that the character of Englishmen would be too weak to contend successfully against that of the races with whom they would be brought into contact, and that they would relapse into barbarism, such an alarm would have seemed too preposterous to be entertained; yet, prior to experience, it would have been equally reasonable to expect that the modern Englishman would adopt the habits of the Hindoo or the Mohican, as that the fiery knights of Normandy would have stooped to imitate a race whom they despised as slaves; that they would have flung away their very knightly names to assume a barbarous equivalent;¹ and would so utterly have cast aside the commanding features of their Northern extraction, that their children's children could be distinguished neither in soul nor body, neither in look, in dress, in language, nor in disposition, from the Celts whom they had subdued. Such, however, was the extraordinary fact. The Irish who had been conquered in the field revenged their defeat on the minds and hearts of their conquerors; and in yielding, yielded only to fling over their new masters the subtle spell of the Celtic disposition. In vain the government attempted to stem the evil. Statute was passed after statute forbidding the "Englishry" of Ireland to use the Irish language,

¹ "The MacMahons in the north were anciently English, to wit, descended from the Fitz-Ursulas, which was a noble family in England; and the same appeareth by the significance of their Irish names. Likewise the M'Sweenies, now in Ulster, were recently of the Veres in England; but that they themselves, for hatred of the English, so disguised their names." —SPENSER'S *View of the State of Ireland*. So the De Burghs became Bourkes or Burkes; the Munster Geraldines merged their family names in that of Desmond; and a younger branch of them called themselves M'Shehies.

or intermarry with Irish families, or copy Irish habits.¹ Penalties were multiplied on penalties; fines, forfeitures, and at last death itself, were threatened for such offences. But all in vain. The stealthy evil crept on irresistibly.² Fresh colonists were sent over to restore the system, but only for themselves or their children to be swept into the stream; and from the century which succeeded the Conquest till the reign of the eighth Henry, the strange phenomenon repeated itself, generation after generation, baffling the wisdom of statesmen, and paralysing every effort at a remedy.

Here was a difficulty which no skill could contend against, and which was increased by the exertions which were made to oppose it. The healthy elements which were introduced to leaven the old became themselves infected, and swelled the mass of evil; and the clearest observers were those who were most disposed to despair. Popery has been the scapegoat which, for the last three centuries, has borne the reproach of Ireland; but before popery had ceased to be the faith of the world, the problem had long presented itself in all its hopelessness. "Some say" (this is the language of 1515), "and for the most part every man, that to find the antidotum for this disease is impossible—for what remedy can be had now more than hath been had unto this time? And there was never remedy found in this two hundred year that could prosper; and no medicine can be had now for this infirmity but such as hath been had afore this time. And folk were as wise that time as they be now; and since they could never find remedy, how should remedy be found by us? And the Pander maketh answer and saith, that it is no marvel that our fathers that were of more wit and wisdom than we, could not find remedy in the premises, *for the herbs did never grow*. And also he saith that the wealth and prosperity of every land is the common wealth of the same, and not the private wealth; and all the English noble folk of this land passeth always their private weal; and in regard thereof

¹ *Statutes of Kilkenny*. Printed by the Irish Antiquarian Society.
 FINGLAS'S *Breviate*.

² The phenomenon must have been observed, and the inevitable consequence of it foreseen, very close upon the Conquest, when the observation digested itself into a prophecy. No story less than three hundred years old could easily have been reported to Baron Finglas as having originated with St. Patrick and St. Columb. The Baron says—"The four Saints, St. Patrick, St. Columb, St. Braghan, and St. Moling, many hundred years ago, made prophecy that Englishmen should conquer Ireland; and said that the said Englishmen should keep the land in prosperity as long as they should keep their own laws; and as soon as they should leave and fall to Irish custom, then they should decay."—HARRIS, p. 88.

setteth little or nought by the common weal; insomuch as there is no common folk in all this world so little set by, so greatly despised, so feeble, so poor, so greatly trodden under foot, as the king's poor common folk be of Ireland."¹ There was no true care for the common weal—that was the especial peculiarity by which the higher classes in Ireland were unfortunately distinguished. In England, the last consideration of a noble-minded man was his personal advantage; Ireland was a theatre for a universal scramble of selfishness, and the invaders caught the national contagion, and became, as the phrase went, *ipsis Hibernis Hiberniores*.

The explanation of this disastrous phenomenon lay partly in the circumstances in which they were placed, partly in the inherent tendencies of human nature itself. The Norman nobles entered Ireland as independent adventurers, who, each for himself, carved out his fortune with his sword; and, unsupported as they were from home, or supported only at precarious intervals, divided from one another by large tracts of country, and surrounded by Irish dependents, it was doubtless more convenient for them to govern by humouring the habits and traditions to which their vassals would most readily submit. The English government, occupied with Scotland and France, had no leisure to maintain a powerful central authority; and a central disciplinarian rule enforced by the sword was contrary to the genius of the age. Under the feudal system, the kings governed only by the consent and with the support of the nobility; and the maintenance at Dublin of a standing military force would have been regarded with extreme suspicion in England, as well as in Ireland. Hence the affairs of both countries were, for the most part, administered under the same forms, forms which were as ill suited to the waywardness of the Celt, as they met exactly the stronger nature of the Saxon. At intervals, when the government was exasperated by unusual outrages, some prince of the blood was sent across as viceroy; and half a century of acquiescence in disorder would be followed by a spasmodic severity, which irritated without subduing, and forfeited affection, while it failed to terrify. At all other times, Ireland was governed by the Norman Irish, and these, as the years went on, were tempted by their convenience to strengthen themselves by Irish alliances, to identify their interests with those of the native chiefs, in order to conciliate their support; to prefer the position of wild and independent

¹ Report on the State of Ireland, 1515: *State Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 17, 18.

sovereigns, resting on the attachment of a people whose affections they had gained by learning to resemble them, to that of military lords over a hostile population, the representatives of a distant authority, on which they could not rely.

This is a partial account of the Irish difficulty. We must look deeper, however, for the full interpretation of it; and outward circumstances never alone suffice to explain a moral transformation. The Roman military colonists remained Roman alike on the Rhine and on the Euphrates. The Turkish conquerors caught no infection from Greece, or from the provinces on the Danube. The Celts in England were absorbed by the Saxon invaders; and the Mogul and the Anglo-Indian alike have shown no tendency to assimilate with the Hindoo. When a marked type of human character yields before another, the change is owing to some element of power in that other, which coming in contact with elements weaker than itself, subdues and absorbs them. The Irish spirit, which exercised so fatal a fascination, was enabled to triumph over the Norman in virtue of representing certain perennial tendencies of humanity, which are latent in all mankind, and which opportunity may at any moment develop. It was not a national spirit—the clans were never united, except by some common hatred; and the normal relation of the chiefs towards each other was a relation of chronic war and hostility. It was rather an impatience of control, a deliberate preference for disorder, a determination in each individual man to go his own way, whether it was a good way or a bad, and a reckless hatred of industry. The result was the inevitable one—oppression, misery, and wrong. But in detail faults and graces were so interwoven, that the offensiveness of the evil was disguised by the charm of the good; and even the Irish vices were the counterfeit of virtues, contrived so cunningly that it was hard to distinguish their true texture. The fidelity of the clansmen to their leaders was faultlessly beautiful; extravagance appeared like generosity, and improvidence like unselfishness; anarchy disguised itself under the name of liberty; and war and plunder were decorated by poetry as the honourable occupation of heroic natures. Such were the Irish with whom the Norman conquerors found themselves in contact; and over them all was thrown a peculiar imaginative grace, a careless atmosphere of humour, sometimes gay, sometimes melancholy, always attractive, which at once disarmed the hand which was raised to strike or punish them. These spirits were dangerous neighbours. Men who first entered the

country at mature age might be fortified by experience against their influence, but on the young they must have exerted a charm of fatal potency. The foster-nurse first chanted the spell over the cradle in wild passionate melodies.¹ It was breathed in the ears of the growing boy by the minstrels who haunted the halls,² and the lawless attractions of disorder proved too strong for the manhood which was trained among so perilous associations.

For such a country, therefore, but one form of government could succeed—an efficient military despotism. The people could be wholesomely controlled only by an English deputy, sustained by an English army, and armed with arbitrary power, till the inveterate turbulence of their tempers had died away under repression, and they had learnt in their improved condition the value of order and rule. This was the opinion of all statesmen who possessed any real knowledge of Ireland, from Lord Talbot under Henry VI. to the latest viceroy who attempted a milder method and found it fail. “If the king were as wise as Solomon the Sage,” said the report of 1515, “he shall never subdue the wild Irish to his obedience without dread of the sword and of the might and strength of his power. As long as they may resist and save their lives, they will not obey the king.”³ Unfortunately, although English statesmen were able to see the course which ought to be followed, it had been too inconvenient to pursue that course. They had put off the evil day, preferring to close their eyes against the mischief instead of grappling with it resolutely; and thus, at the opening of the sixteenth century, when the hitherto neglected barbarians were about to become a sword in the pope’s hands to fight the battle against the Reformation, the “king’s Irish enemies” had recovered all but absolute possession of the island, and nothing remained of Strongbow’s conquests save the shadow of a titular sovereignty, and a country strengthened in hostility by the means which had been used to subdue it.

The events on which we are about to enter require for their

¹ Some sayeth that the English noble folk useth to deliver their children to the king’s Irish enemies to foster, and therewith maketh bands.—*State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 13.

² “Harpers, rhymers, Irish chroniclers, bards, and ishallyn (ballad singers) commonly go with praises to gentlemen in the English pale, praising in rhymes, otherwise called ‘danes,’ their extortions, robberies, and abuses as valiantness; which rejoiceth them in their evil doings, and procures a talent of Irish disposition and conversation in them.”—Cowley to Cromwell: *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 450. There is a remarkable passage to the same effect in SPENSER’S *View of the State of Ireland*.

³ State of Ireland, and plan for its reformation: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 28.

understanding a sketch of the position of the various chiefs, as they were at this time scattered over the island. The English pale, originally comprising "the four shires," as they were called, of Dublin, Kildare, Meath, and Uriel, or Louth, had been shorn down to half its old dimensions. The line extended from Dundalk to Ardee; from Ardee by Castletown to Kells; thence through Athboy and Trim to the Castle of Maynooth; from Maynooth it crossed to Claine upon the Liffey, and then followed up the line of the river to Ballimore Eustace, from which place it skirted back at the rear of the Wicklow and Dublin mountains to the forts at Dalkey, seven miles south of Dublin.¹ This narrow strip alone, some fifty miles long and twenty broad, was in any sense English. Beyond the borders the common law of England was of no authority; the king's writ was but a strip of parchment; and the country was parcelled among a multitude of independent chiefs, who acknowledged no sovereignty but that of strength, who levied tribute on the inhabitants of the pale as a reward for a nominal protection of their rights, and as a compensation for abstaining from the plunder of their farms.² Their swords were their sceptres; their codes of right, the Brehon traditions—a convenient system, which was called law, but which in practice was a happy contrivance for the composition of felonies.³

¹ Report on the State of Ireland: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 22.

² Baron Finglas, in his suggestions for a reformation, urges that "no black rent be given ne paid to any Irishman upon any of the four shires from henceforward."—HARRIS, p. 101. "Many an Irish captain keepeth and preserveth the king's subjects in peace without hurt of their enemies; inasmuch as some of those hath tribute yearly of English men . . . not to the intent that they should escape harmless; but to the intent to devour them, as the greedy hound delivereth the sheep from the wolf."—*State Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 16, 17.

³ EUDOXUS—What is that which you call the Brehon Law? It is a word unto us altogether unknown.

IRENÆUS—It is a rule of right, unwritten, but delivered by tradition from one to another, in which oftentimes there appeareth great show of equity in determining the right between parties, but in many things repugning quite both to God's law and man's. As, for example, in the case of murder, the Brehon, that is, their judge, will compound between the murderer and the friends of the party murdered, which prosecute the action, that the malefactor shall give unto them or unto the child or wife of him that is slain, a recompense which they call an Eriarch. By which vile law of theirs many murders are made up and smothered. And this judge being, as he is called, the Lord's Brehon, adjudgeth, for the most part, a better share unto his Lord, that is the Lord of the soil, or the head of that sept, and also unto himself for his judgment, a greater portion than unto the plaintiffs or parties grieved.—SPENSER'S *View of the State of Ireland*. Spenser describes the system as he experienced it in active operation. Ancient written collections of the Brehon laws, however, existed and still exist.

These chiefs, with their dependent clans, were distributed over the four provinces in the following order. The Geraldines, the most powerful of the remaining Normans, were divided into two branches. The Geraldines of the south, under the Earls of Desmond, held Limerick, Cork, and Kerry; the Geraldines of Leinster lay along the frontiers of the English pale; and the heads of the house, the Earls of Kildare, were the feudal superiors of the greater portion of the English counties. To the Butlers, Earls of Ormond and Ossory, belonged Kilkenny, Carlow, and Tipperary. The De Burghs, or Bourkes, as they called themselves, were scattered over Galway, Roscommon, and the south of Sligo, occupying the broad plains which lie between the Shannon and the mountains of Connemara and Mayo. This was the relative position into which these clans had settled at the Conquest, and it had been maintained with little variation.

The north, which had fallen to the Lacies and the De Courcies, had been wholly recovered by the Irish. The Lacies had become extinct. The De Courcies, once Earls of Ulster, had migrated to the south, and were reduced to the petty fief of Kinsale, which they held under the Desmonds. The Celtic chieftains had returned from the mountains to which they had been driven, bringing back with them, more intensely than ever, the Irish habits and traditions. Old men, who were alive in 1533, remembered a time when the Norman families attempted to live in something of an English manner,¹ and when there were towns in the middle of Ireland with decent municipal institutions. The wars of the Roses had destroyed the remnants of English influence by calling away a number of leading nobles, such especially as were least infected by the Irish character; and the native chiefs had reoccupied the lands of their ancestors, unresisted, if not welcomed as allies. The O'Neils and O'Donnells had spread down over Ulster to the frontiers of the pale. The O'Connors and O'Carrolls had recrossed the Shannon, and pushed forwards into Kildare; the O'Connor Don was established in a castle near Portarlinton, said to be one of the strongest in Ireland; and the O'Carroll had seized Leap, an ancient Danish fortress, surrounded by bog and forest, a few miles from Parsonstown.

¹ By relation of ancient men in times past within remembrance, all the English lords and gentills within the pale heretofore kept retinues of English yeomen in their houses, after the English fashion, according to the extent of their lands, to the great strength and succour of their neighbours the king's subjects. And now for the most part they keep horsemen and knaves, which live upon the king's subjects; and keep in manner no hospitality, but live upon the poor.—The Council of Ireland to the Master of the Rolls, 1533: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 163.

O'Brien of Inchiquin, Prince—as he styled himself—of Thomond, no longer contented with his principality of Clare, had thrown a bridge across the Shannon five miles above Limerick, and was thus enabled to enter Munster at his pleasure and spread his authority towards the south; while the M'Carties and O'Sullivan, in Cork and Kerry, were only not dangerous to the Earls of Desmond, because the Desmonds were more Irish than themselves, and were accepted as their natural chiefs.

In Tipperary and Kilkenny only the Celtic reaction was held in check. The Earls of Ormond, although they were obliged themselves to live as Irish chieftains, and to govern by the Irish law, yet partly from an inherent nobility of nature, partly through family alliances and a more sustained intercourse with their English kindred, partly perhaps from the inveterate feud of their house with the Geraldines of Kildare, remained true to their allegiance, and maintained the English authority so far as their power extended. That power, unfortunately, was incommensurate with their good will, and their situation prevented them from rendering the assistance to the crown which they desired. Wexford, Wicklow, and the mountains of Dublin, were occupied by the Highland tribes of O'Bryne and O'Toole, who, in their wild glens and dangerous gorges, defied attempts to conquer them, and who were able, at all times, issuing down out of the passes of the hills, to cut off communication with the pale. Thus the Butlers had no means of reaching Dublin except through the county of Kildare, the home of their hereditary rivals and foes.

This is a general account of the situation of the various parties in Ireland at the beginning of the sixteenth century. I have spoken only of the leading families; and I have spoken of them as if they possessed some feudal supremacy—yet even this slight thread of order was in many cases without real consistency, and was recognised only when fear, or passion, or interest, prompted. “There be sixty counties, called regions, in Ireland,” says the report of 1515, “inhabited with the king's Irish enemies, some regions as big as a shire, some more, some less, where reigneth more than sixty chief captains, whereof some calleth themselves kings, some king's peers in their language, some princes, some dukes, that liveth only by the sword, and obeyeth to no other temporal person save only to himself that is strong. And every of the said captains maketh war and peace for himself, and holdeth by the sword, and hath imperial jurisdiction, and obeyeth no other person, English or Irish, except only to

such persons as may subdue him by the sword. . . . Also, in every of the said regions, there be divers petty captains, and every of them maketh war and peace for himself, without licence of his chief captain. . . . And there be more than thirty of the English noble folk that followeth this same Irish order, and keepeth the same rule."¹ Every man, in short, who could raise himself to that dishonourable position, was captain of a troop of banditti, and counted it his chief honour to live upon the plunder of his neighbour.

This condition of things might have been expected to work its own cure. The earth will not support human life uncultivated, and men will not labour without some reasonable hope that they will enjoy the fruit of their labour. Anarchy, therefore, is usually shortlived, and perishes of inanition. Unruly persons must either comply with the terms on which alone they are permitted to subsist, and consent to submit to some kind of order, or they must die. The Irish, however, were enabled to escape from this most wholesome provision by the recklessness of the people, who preferred any extremity of suffering to the endurance of the least restraint, and by the tyranny under which the labouring poor were oppressed. In England, the same hands were trained to hold the sword and to hold the plough. The labourers and the artisans in peace were the soldiers in war. In Ireland, labour was treated as disgraceful; the chiefs picked out the strongest and fiercest of their subjects, and trained them only to fight; the labourers were driven to the field as beasts of burden, and compelled to work on the chance that the harvest might be secured. By this precarious means, with the addition of the wild cattle which roamed in thousands among the woods and bogs, sufficient sustenance was extracted from the soil to support a scanty population, the majority of whom were supposed to be the most wretched specimens of human nature which could be found upon the globe. "What common folk in all this world," the report says, "is so poor, so feeble, so evil beseen in town and field, so bestial, so greatly oppressed and trodden under foot, fares so evil, with so great misery, and with so wretched life, as the common folk of Ireland? What pity is here, what ruth is to report, there is no tongue that can tell, ne person that can write. It passeth far the orators and muses all to shew the order of the nobles, and how cruel they entreateth the poor common people. What danger it is to the king against God to suffer his land, whereof he bears the charge and the cure

¹ *State Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 1, 5, 6.

temporal, to be in the said disorder so long without remedy. It were more honour to surrender his claim thereto, and to make no longer prosecution thereof, than to suffer his poor subjects always to be so oppressed, and all the nobles of the land to be at war within themselves, always shedding of Christian blood without remedy. The herd must render account for his fold; and the king for his." ¹

The English writer did not exaggerate the picture, for his description is too abundantly confirmed in every page of the Celtic Annalists, with only but a single difference. To the Englishman the perpetual disturbance appeared a dishonour and disgrace; to the Celt it was the normal and natural employment of human beings, in the pursuit of which lay the only glory and the only manly pleasure.

A population of such a character presented in itself a difficulty sufficiently formidable; and this difficulty was increased by the character of the family on whom the circumstances of their position most obliged the English government to rely. There were two methods of maintaining the show of English sovereignty. Either an English deputy might reside in Dublin, supported by a standing army; or it was necessary to place confidence in one or other of the great Irish noblemen, and to govern through him. Either method had its disadvantages. The expense of the first was enormous, for the pay of the common soldier was sixpence or eightpence a-day—an equivalent of six or eight shillings; and as the arrival of an English deputy was the signal for a union throughout Ireland of all septs and clans against a common enemy, his presence was worse than useless, unless he could maintain a body of efficient troops numerous enough to cope with the coalition. At the same time the cost, great as it would have been, must have fallen wholly on the crown, for the parliaments would make no grants of money for the support of a mercenary army, except on extraordinary emergencies.

On the other hand, to choose an Irish deputy was to acquiesce in disorder, and to lend a kind of official sanction to it. It was inexpensive, however, and therefore convenient; and evils which were not actually felt in perpetual demands for money, and in uncomfortable reports, could for a time be forgotten or ignored. In this direction lay all the temptations. The condition of the country was only made known to the English government through the deputy, who could represent it in

¹ *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 14.

such colours as he pleased; and the government could persuade themselves that evils no longer complained of had ceased to exist.

This latter method, therefore, found most favour in London. Irish noblemen were glad to accept the office of deputy, and to discharge it at a low salary or none; but it was in order to abuse their authority for their personal advantage. They indemnified themselves for their exertions to keep order, which was not kept, by the extortion which they practised in the name of the government which they represented; and thus deservedly made the English rule more than ever detested. Instead of receiving payment, they were allowed while deputies what was called "coyne and livery;" that is to say, they were allowed to levy military service, and to quarter their followers on the farmers and poor gentlemen of the pale; or else to raise fines in composition, under pretence that they were engaged in the service of the crown. The entire cost of this system was estimated at the enormous sum of a hundred pounds a day.¹ The exactions might have been tolerated if the people had been repaid by protection; but forced as they were to pay blackmail at the same time to the Irish borderers, the double burdens had the effect of driving every energetic settler out of the pale, and his place was filled by some poor Irishman whom use had made acquainted with misery.²

¹ The deputy useth to make great rodes, journeyes, and hostings, now in the north parts of Ulster, now in the south parts of Munster, now in the west parts of Connaught, and taketh the king's subjects with him by compulsion oft times, with victual for three or four weeks, and chargeth the common people with carriage of the same, and giveth licence to all the noble folk to cesse and rear their costs on the common people and on the king's poor subjects; and the end of that journey is commonly no other in effect, but that the deputy useth to receive a reward of one or two hundred kyne to himself, and so depart, without any more hurt to the king's enemies, after that he hath turned the king's subjects and the poor common folk to their charge and costs of two or three thousand pounds. And over that, the deputy, on his progress and regress, oppresseth the king's poor common folk with horse meat and man's meat to all his host. And over that, in summer, when grass is most plenty, they must have oats or malt to their horse at will, or else money therefore.

The premises considered, some saith the king's deputy, by extortion, chargeth the king's poor subjects and common folk, in horse meat and man's meat, by estimation, to the value of a hundred pound every day in the year, one day counted with another, which cometh to the sum of 36,000 pounds yearly.—*State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 13. Finglas says that coyne and livery would destroy hell itself, if it was used there.—*FINGLAS'S Breviate*.

² The wretchedness of the country drove the Irish to emigrate in multitudes. In 1524, twenty thousand of them had settled themselves in Pembrokeshire; and the majority of these had crossed in a single twelve-month. They brought with them Irish manners, and caused no little

Not was extortion the only advantage which the Irish deputies obtained from their office. They prosecuted their private feuds with the revenues of the state. They connived at the crimes of any chieftain who would join their faction. Every conceivable abuse in the administration of the government attended the possession of power by the Geraldines of Kildare, and yet by the Geraldines it was almost inevitable that the power should be held. The choice lay between the Kildares and the Ormonds. No other nobleman could pretend to compete with these two. The Earls of Desmond only could take rank as their equals; and the lordships of Desmond were at the opposite extremity of the island. The services of the Earls of Ormond were almost equally unavailable. When an Earl of Ormond was residing at Dublin as deputy, he was separated from his clan by fifty miles of dangerous road. The policy of the Geraldines was to secure the government for themselves by making it impossible for any other person to govern; and the appointment of their rival was a signal for the revolt of the entire clan, both in Leinster and Munster. The Butlers were too weak to resist this combination; and inasmuch as they were themselves always loyal when a Geraldine was in power, and the Geraldines were disloyal when a Butler was in power, the desire to hush up the difficulty, and to secure a show of quiet, led to the consistent preference of the more convenient chief.

There were qualities also in the Kildare family which gave them peculiar influence, not in Ireland only, but at the English court. Living like wild Irish in their castle at Maynooth, they appeared in London with the address of polished courtiers. When the complaints against them became too serious to neglect, they were summoned to give account of their conduct. They had only to present themselves before the council, and it was at once impossible to believe that the frank, humorous, high-minded gentlemen at the bar could be the monsters who were charged with so fearful crimes. Their ever-ready wit and fluent words, their show of bluntness and pretence of simplicity, disarmed anger and dispersed calumny; and they returned on all such occasions to Ireland more trusted than ever, to laugh at the folly which they had duped.

trouble. "The king's town of Tenby," wrote a Welsh gentleman to Wolsey, "is almost clean Irish, as well the head men and rulers as the commons of the said town; and of their high and presumptuous minds [they] do disobey all manner the king's process that cometh to them out of the king's exchequer of Pembroke."—R. Gryffith to Cardinal Wolsey: *Ellis, first series*, vol. i. p. 191, etc.

The farce had already continued through two generations at the opening of the Reformation. Gerald, the eighth earl, was twice in rebellion against Henry VII. He crowned Lambert Simnel with his own hand; when Lambert Simnel fell, he took up Perkin Warbeck; and under pretence of supporting a competitor for the crown, carried fire and sword through Ireland. At length, when England was quiet, Sir Edward Poynings was sent to Dublin to put down this new King-maker. He took the earl prisoner, with some difficulty, and despatched him to London, where he appeared at the council-board, hot-handed from murder and treason. The king told him that heavy accusations would be laid to his charge, and that he had better choose some counsel to plead his cause. The earl looked at him with a smile of simplicity. "I will choose the ablest in England," he said; "your Highness I take for my counsel against these false knaves."¹ The accusations were proceeded with. Among other enormities, Kildare had burnt the cathedral at Cashel, and the archbishop was present as witness and prosecutor. The earl confessed his offence: "but by Jasus," he added, "I would not have done it if I had not been told that my lord archbishop was inside."² The insolent wit, and the danger of punishing so popular a nobleman, passed the reply as sufficient. The council laughed. "All Ireland cannot govern this earl," said one. "Then let this earl govern all Ireland," was the prompt answer of Henry VII.³ He was sent over a convicted traitor—he returned a knight of the Garter, lord deputy, and the representative of the crown. Rebellion was a successful policy, and a lesson which corresponded so closely to the Irish temper was not forgotten.

"What, thou fool," said Sir Gerald Shaneson to a younger son of this nobleman, thirty years later, when he found him slow to join the rebellion against Henry VIII. "What, thou fool, thou shalt be the more esteemed for it. For what hadst thou, if thy father had not done so? What was he until he crowned a king here, took Garth, the king's captain, prisoner, hanged his son, resisted Poynings and all deputies; killed them of Dublin upon Oxmantown Green; would suffer no man to rule here for the king but himself! Then the king regarded him, and made him deputy, and married thy mother to him;⁴ or else

¹ LELAND, vol. ii. p. 110.

² CAMPION'S *History of Ireland*. LELAND, vol. ii. p. 111.

³ CAMPION. LELAND.

⁴ The earl married Elizabeth, daughter of Oliver St. John, while in London.

thou shouldst never have had a foot of land, where now thou mayest dispend four hundred marks by the year." ¹

These scornful words express too truly the position of the Earl of Kildare, which, however, he found it convenient to disguise under a decent exterior. The borders of the pale were partially extended; the O'Tooles were driven further into the Wicklow mountains, and an outlying castle was built to overawe them at Powerscourt. Some shadow of a revenue was occasionally raised; and by this show of service, and because change would involve the crown in expense, he was allowed to go his own way. He held his ground till the close of his life, and dying, he left behind him a son trained on his father's model, and who followed with the utmost faithfulness in his father's steps.

Gerald, son of Gerald, ninth earl, became deputy, almost it seemed by right of inheritance, in 1513; and things were allowed to continue in their old course for another five years; when at length Henry VIII. awoke to the disgrace which the condition of the country reflected upon him. The report of 1515 was the first step gained; the Earl of Ormond contributed to the effect produced by the report, with representations of the conduct of the deputy, who had been fortifying his own castle with government stores; and the result was a resolution to undertake measures of real vigour. In 1520, the Earl of Kildare was deprived of his office, and sent for to England. His place was taken by the Earl of Surrey, who of all living Englishmen combined in the highest degree the necessary qualities of soldier and statesman. It seemed as if the old weak forbearance was to last no longer, and as if Ireland was now finally to learn the needful lesson of obedience.

But the first efforts to cure an inveterate evil rarely succeed; and Henry VIII., like every other statesman who has undertaken to reform Ireland, was to purchase experience by failure. The report had declared emphatically that the Irish chiefs would never submit so long as they might resist, and escape with their lives; that conciliation would be only interpreted as weakness; and that the tyrannical lords and gentlemen must be coerced into equity by the sword freely used.

The king, however, was young and sanguine; he was unable to accept so hard a conclusion; he could not believe that any body of human beings were so hopelessly inaccessible to the ordinary means of influence, as the Irish gentlemen were repre-

¹ Report to Cromwell, apparently by Allen, Master of the Rolls: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 175.

sented to be. He would first try persuasion, and have recourse to extremity only if persuasion failed.

His directions to the Earl of Surrey, therefore, were that at the earliest opportunity he should call an assembly of so many of the Irish chiefs as he could induce to come to him, and to discourse to them upon the elementary principles of social order and government.

"We think it expedient," he wrote, "that when ye shall call the lords and other captains of that our land before you, as of good congruence ye must needs do; ye, after and amongst other overtures by your wisdom then to be made, shall declare unto them the great decay, ruin, and desolation of that commodious and fertile land, for lack of politic governance and good justice; which can never be brought in order unless the unbridled sensualities of insolent folk be brought under the rule of the laws. For realms without justice be but tyrannies and robberies, more consonant to beastly appetites than to the laudable life of reasonable creatures. And whereas wilfulness doth reign by strength without law or justice, there is no distinction of propriety in dominion; ne yet any man may say this is mine, but by strength the weaker is subdued and oppressed, which is contrary to all laws, both of God and man. . . . Howbeit, our mind is, not that ye shall impress on them any opinion by fearful words, that we intend to expel them from their lands and dominions lawfully possessed; ne yet that we be minded to constrain them precisely to obey our laws, ministered by our justices there; but under good manner to show unto them that of necessity it is requisite that every reasonable creature be governed by a law. And therefore, if they shall allege that our laws there used be too extreme and rigorous; and that it should be very hard for them to observe the same; then ye may further ensearch of them under what manners, and by what laws, they will be ordered and governed, to the intent that if their laws be good and reasonable, they may be approved; and the rigour of our laws, if they shall think them too hard, be mitigated and brought to such moderation as they may conveniently live under the same. By which means ye shall finally induce them of necessity to conform their order of living to the observance of some reasonable law, and not to live at will as they have used heretofore."¹

So wrote Henry in 1520, being then twenty-eight years old, in his inexperience of human nature, and especially of the Irish form of it. No words could be truer, wiser, or more

¹ Henry VIII. to the Earl of Surrey: *State Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 52, 53.

generous; but those only listen effectively to words of wisdom and generosity, who themselves possess something of the same qualities; and the Irish would not have required that such an address should be made to them if they had been capable of profiting by it. If Surrey was sanguine of any good result, he was soon undeceived. He had no sooner landed than the whole country was in arms against him—O'Neile, O'Carroll, O'Connor, O'Brien, Desmond, broke into simultaneous rebellion, acting, as was proved by intercepted letters,¹ under instructions which Kildare had sent from England. Surrey saw at a glance the justice of the language of the report. He informed Wolsey briefly of the state of the country, and advised that unless the king was prepared for extreme measures, he should not waste money in partial efforts.² Writing subsequently to Henry himself, he said that the work to be done was a repetition of the conquest of Wales by Edward I., and it would prove at least as tedious and as expensive. Nevertheless, if the king could make up his mind to desire it, there was no insuperable difficulty. He would undertake the work himself with six thousand men. The difficulty would be then, however, but half overcome, for the habits of the people were incurable. Strong castles must be built up and down the island, like those at Conway and Carnarvon; and a large immigration would be necessary of English colonists.³ Either as much as this should be done, the earl thought, or nothing. Half measures only made bad into worse; and a policy of repression, if not consistently maintained, was unjust and pernicious. It encouraged the better affected of the inhabitants to show their good will to the government; and when the Irish were again in power, these persons were marked for vengeance.

Practical experience was thus laid against Henry's philosophy; and it would have been well if the king could have discerned clearly on which side the truth was likely to lie. For the misfortune of Ireland, this was not the case. It was inconvenient at the moment to undertake a costly conquest. Surrey

¹ This is one of them, and another of similar import was found to have been sent to O'Neile. "Life and health to O'Carroll, from the Earl of Kildare. There is none Irishman in Ireland that I am better content with than with you; and whenever I come into Ireland, I shall do you good for anything that ye shall do for me; and any displeasure that I have done to you, I shall make you amends therefore, desiring you to keep good peace to Englishmen till an English deputy shall come there; and when an English deputy shall come thither, do your best to make war upon Englishmen then, except such as be toward me, whom you know well yourself."

² *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 45.

³ *Ibid.* p. 62.

⁴ Surrey to Henry VIII.: *State Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 72, 3, 4.

was maintained with a short retinue, and from want of power could only enter upon a few partial expeditions. He inflicted a heavy defeat upon O'Neile; he stormed a castle of O'Connor's; and showed, with the small means at his disposal, what he might have done with far less support than he had required. He went where he pleased through the country. But his course was "as the way of a ship through the sea, or as the way of a bird through the air." The elements yielded without resistance, and closed in behind him; and, after eighteen months of manful exertion, feeling the uselessness of further enterprises conducted on so small a scale, to the sorrow and alarm of the Irish council, he desired and obtained his recall.¹

Meanwhile, in England, the Earl of Kildare had made good use of his opportunities. In spite of his detected letters, he had won his way into favour. He accompanied Henry to the Field of the Cloth of Gold, where he distinguished himself by his brilliant bearing; and instead of punishing him as a traitor, the king allowed him to marry Lady Elizabeth Grey, daughter of the Marquis of Dorset, and nearly related to the blood royal. He was then permitted to return to Ireland; not, however, immediately as deputy. An intermediate effort was made to govern through Lord Ormond, whose intentions were excellent, but unfortunately the Irish refused to submit to him. The Earl of Desmond remained in rebellion, and invaded Kilkenny from the south; and two years followed of universal insurrection, pillage, and murder. Kildare accused Ormond to the English council as responsible;² Ormond retorted with similar charges against Kildare, and commissioners were sent over to "investigate," with instructions, if they saw reason, to replace Kildare in his old office.

The permission was sufficient; in 1524 he was again deputy; and no deliberate purpose of misrule could have led to results more fatal. The earl, made bold by impunity, at once prepared for a revolt from the English crown. Hitherto he had been contented to make himself essential to the maintenance of the English sovereignty; he now launched out into bolder measures, and encouraged by Henry's weakness, resolved to dare the worst extremity. On the breaking out of the French war of 1523-24, his kinsman, the earl of Desmond, opened a negotiation with Francis I. for the landing of a French army in Munster.³

¹ Council of Ireland to Wolsey: *State Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 92, 3.

² Campion says Kildare had a friend in the Duke of Suffolk.—*History of Ireland*, by EDWARD CAMPION, p. 161.

³ Act of Attainder of the Earl of Kildare: *Irish Statute Book*, 28 Hen.

Kildare, while professing that he was endeavouring to take Desmond prisoner, was holding secret interviews with him to concert plans for a united move,¹ and was strengthening himself at the same time with alliances among the native chiefs. One of his daughters became the wife of the O'Connor; another married O'Carroll, of Leap Castle; and a third the Baron of Slane;² and to leave no doubt of his intentions, he transferred the cannon and military stores from Dublin Castle to his own fortress at Maynooth. Lord Ormond sent information to England of these proceedings, but he could gain no hearing. For three years the Geraldines were allowed to continue their preparations undisturbed; and perhaps they might have matured their plans at leisure, so odious had become the mention of Ireland to the English statesmen, had not the king's divorce, by embroiling him with the pope and emperor, made the danger serious.

The alliance of England and France had disconcerted the first scheme. No sooner was this new opportunity opened than, with Kildare's consent, Desmond applied to Charles V. with similar overtures.³ This danger was too serious to be neglected;

VIII. cap. 1. An account of this negotiation is to be seen in a paper in the British Museum, Titus, B. xi. fol. 352.

¹ Act of Attainder of the Earl of Kildare: Ibid.

² The elder sisters of the "fair Geraldine" of Lord Surrey.

³ The emperor's chaplain, Gonzalo Fernandez, was the agent through whom the correspondence with Desmond was conducted.—*State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 186. And see *Cotton MS.* Vespasian, c. iv. fol. 264, 276, 285, 288, 297.—"He sent unto the emperor, provoking and enticing him to send an army into this said land."—Act of Attainder of the Earl of Kildare. See also *LELAND*, vol. ii. p. 136.

The account given by Gonzalo Fernandez of his visit to Desmond is among the Archives at Brussels, and supplies a curious picture of the state of the country.

Report of Gonzalo Fernandez.

"April 23, 1529.

"On arriving at the coast of Ireland we touched at a port belonging to the King of England named Cork. Many of the Irish people came on board the ship, and told me that the gentleman of the Earl of Desmond had just returned from Spain with presents from the Emperor to the earl.

"Leaving Cork, we were driven by bad weather into another harbour called Beran,¹ from whence I sent one of my servants to inform the earl of my arrival. In four days the earl's answer came, telling me that I was welcome, and that he was at a place called Dingle, where he hoped to see me. He addressed his letter to me as 'Chaplain of our Sovereign Lord the Emperor;' and this, I understand, is his usual mode of expression when speaking of his Majesty. He had also sent to some of the other noblemen of the country, with whom he proposed to form a league, to tell them of my arrival.

"I set out again, and on the way five of the earl's people came to me to say that their master had gone to a harbour a few miles off to capture

¹ Beerhaven, perhaps.

and in 1527, Kildare was a second time summoned to London. He went, so confident was he of the weakness of the government,

some French and English vessels there, and would be glad of my assistance. This I declined, and the earl, I understand, was satisfied with my excuses.

"The day after, the 21st of April, we reached the said harbour of Dingle, and were honourably received by the townspeople, and by a party of the earl's attendants. About four o'clock the earl returned himself, attended by fifty horse and as many halberdiers. He came at once to my quarters, and asked after the welfare of 'our Lord the Emperor.' I replied that, by the grace of God, his Majesty was well, and I had sent his commendations to his lordship.

"We then dined; and afterwards the earl and his council repaired to my chamber, where we presented him with his Majesty's letter. He read it and his council read it. His Majesty, he said, referred him to me. I was commissioned to make known his Majesty's pleasure to him. I at once declared my instructions, first in English to the earl, and afterwards in Latin to his council; which I said were to this effect.

"One Godfrey, a friend of their lord, had lately presented himself to the Emperor with their lord's letter, in which their lord, after speaking of the goodwill and affection which he entertained towards the Emperor's Majesty, had expressed a desire to enter into close alliance with his Majesty, as friend to friend and enemy to enemy, declaring himself ready, in all things and at all times, to obey his Majesty's commands.

"Further, the said Godfrey had requested the Emperor to send a confidential person to Ireland, to learn more particularly their lord's intentions, and his resources and power; and further, to negotiate a treaty and establish a firm and complete alliance. For these purposes the Emperor commissioned myself. I was the bearer to them of his Majesty's thanks for their proposals, and I said I was so far in my master's confidence that I was assured their lord might expect all possible assistance at the Emperor's hands."

"When I had done, the earl spoke a few words to his council. He then took off his cap, and said he thanked his Majesty for his gracious condescension. He had addressed himself to his Majesty as to his sovereign lord, to entreat his protection. His Majesty was placed in this world in his high position, in order that no one prince might oppress or injure another. He related his descent to me. He said that, between his family and the English, there had ever existed a mortal enmity, and he explained the cause to me.

"I replied that his Majesty never failed to support his allies and his subjects, and should he claim assistance in that capacity, his Majesty would help him as he helped all his other good friends. I advised the earl to put in writing the words which he had used to me. He thought it would be enough if I repeated them; but when I said the story was too long, and my memory might not retain it with accuracy, he said he would do as I desired.

"We then spoke of the support for which he was looking, of his projects and resources, and of the places in which he proposed to serve. He said he wanted from his Majesty four large vessels, two hundred tons each, six pinnacles well provided with artillery, and five hundred Flemings to work them. I said at once and earnestly, that such a demand was out of all reason, before he, on his part, had achieved something in his Majesty's service. I remonstrated fully and largely, although, to avoid being tedious, I omit the details. In the end his council were satisfied that he must reduce his demands till his Majesty had more reason to know what was to be expected from him, and he consented, as will be seen by his own memoir.

"Of all men in the world the earl hates most deeply the Cardinal of

and again he was found to have calculated justly. He was arraigned before the council, overwhelmed with invectives by

York. He told me he had been in alliance with France, and had a relation called De Quindel, now with the French army in Italy. In future, he said he would have no dealings with the French. As your Majesty's enemies, they were his enemies.

"Your Majesty will be pleased to understand that there are in Ireland four principal cities. The city of Dublin is the largest and richest in the island, and neither in the town nor in the neighbourhood has the Earl of Desmond land or subjects. The Earl of Kildare is sovereign in that district, but that earl is a kinsman of the Earl of Desmond, and has married his cousin.

"The Earl of Kildare, however, is at present a prisoner in the Tower of London.

"Of the other three cities, one is called Waterford, the second Cork, the third Limerick; and in all of these the Earl of Desmond has lordships and vassals. He has dominions, also, among the wild tribes; he has lords and knights on his estates who pay him tribute. He has some allies, but not so many, by a great deal, as he has enemies.

"He has ten castles of his own, some of which are strong and well built, especially one named Dungarven, which the King has often attempted to take without success.

"The earl himself is from thirty to forty years old, and is rather above the middle height. He keeps better justice throughout his dominions than any other chief in Ireland. Robbers and homicides find no mercy, and are executed out of hand. His people are in high order and discipline. They are armed with short bows and swords. The earl's guard are in a mail from neck to heel, and carry halberds. He has also a number of horse, some of whom know how to break a lance. They all ride admirably without saddle or stirrup."

After the report of Gonzalvo Fernandez, Desmond himself continues in Latin.

"Hereunto be added informations addressed to the invincible and most sacred Cæsar, ever august, by the Earl of Desmond, Lord of Ogonyll and the liberties of Kilcrysge.

"I, James Earl of Desmond, am of royal blood, and of the race of the Conqueror who did lawfully subdue Britain, great and small, and did reduce Scotland and Ireland under his yoke.

"The first cause of the enmity between myself and the King of England is an ancient prophecy or prediction, believed by the English nation, and written in their books and chronicles, that all England will be conquered by an Earl of Desmond, which enterprise I have not yet undertaken.

"The second cause is that, through fear of this prophecy, the King of England has committed his powers to my predecessors who have borne rule in Ireland; and when Thomas Earl of Desmond, my grandfather, in peaceable manner attended Parliament in Ireland, no cause being alleged against him, but merely in dread of the prophecy, they struck off his head.

"The third cause is that, when Richard, son of the King of England [sic], heard that there were ancient feuds between the English and my predecessors, he came to Ireland with an army and a great fleet in the time of my father; and then did my father make all Ireland to be subdued unto himself, some few towns only excepted.

"The fourth cause is that, by reason of the aforesaid feuds, the King of England did cause Gerald Earl of Kildare, my father's kinsman, to be destroyed in prison [*destrui in carceribus*] until that my father, by might and power, did liberate the said Earl of Kildare, and did obtain his own purposes, and did make his kinsman viceroy of Ireland.

"The fifth cause is that, when peace was hardly begun between my

Wolsey,¹ and sent to the tower. But he escaped by his old art. No sooner was he committed, than Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald,

aforesaid father and the King of England, a certain sickness fell upon my father, I myself being then eight years old.

"The King, when he heard this, made a league of Irish and English to kill my father; he being then, as they thought, unable to take the field. They, being banded together, made war against my father for twenty-four years, wherein, by God's grace, they had small success.

"The sixth cause is that, when peace was made at last between the King that now is and myself, I, in faith of the said peace, sent certain of my servants to the parts beyond the seas to Flanders and France, and the attorneys of the King of England did despoil my servants of the sum of £9000, and threw them into prison, where they now remain.

"Hereon follows my supplication:—

"These things premised, I, the aforesaid earl, do implore and entreat the invincible and most sacred Majesty of Cæsar Augustus that he will deign to provide me with remedy, and I, with all my horses and people, do devote myself to your Majesty's service, seeing that your Majesty is appointed for the welfare of the oppressed, and to be lord paramount of all the earth.

"To revenge the injuries done to myself and my family by the King of England, I have the following powers; that is to say, 16,500 foot and 1500 horse. Also I have friends, confederate with me, whose names be these—

"1. The Prince O'Brien, who can make 600 horse and 1000 foot.

2. Trobal de Burgh	"	100	"	600	"
3. Sir Richard Poer	"	40	"	200	"
4. Lord Thomas Butler	"	60	"	240	"
5. Sir John Galty	"	80	"	400	"
6. Sir Gerald Fitzgerald	"	40	"	200	"
7. The White Knight	"	400	"	800	"
8. O'Donnell, Prince of Ulster	"	800	"	4000	"
9. The Knight of the Valley	"	40	"	240	"
10. Baron MacMys	"	40	"	500	"
11. Captain Macguire	"	30	"	200	"

"With divers others whose names be here omitted.

"Moreover, I, the aforesaid James Earl of Desmond, do make known to the Majesty of Cæsar august, that there is an alliance between me and the King of Scotland, and, by frequent embassies, we understand each other's purposes and intentions.

"Finally, divine grace permitting, I intend to gather together my own and my friends' powers, and lead them in person against Piers Butler, deputy of the King of England, and against Limerick, Wexford, and Dublin, the cities which the King holds in Ireland.

"For the aid for which I look from your Majesty, I desire especially cannon available for land service and fit for breaching castles. May it please your Majesty, therefore, to send me cannon, that I may be the better able to do your Majesty service.

"And for myself, I promise on my faith to obey your Majesty in all things. I will be friend of your friends; enemy of your enemies; and your Majesty's especial and particular subject. If ever I chance to displease you, I will submit myself to your correction and chastisement.

"Written in my town, this 28th day of April, 1529, in the presence of Gonzalvo Fernandez, Denys Mac D——c, Doctor of Arms and Medicine, Denys Tathe, Maurice Herly.

JAMES OF DESMOND."

—*The Pilgrim*, pp. 171-5

¹"You remember how the lewd earl your kinsman," he said to him, "who passeth not whom he serve, might he change his master, sent his confeder-

who had accompanied him to England, hurried back across the Channel to the castle of her brother-in-law, O'Connor.¹ The robber chief instantly rose and attacked the pale. The Marchers opened their lines to give his banditti free passage into the interior;² and he seized and carried off prisoner the Baron of Delvin, who had been made vice-deputy on Kildare's departure. Desmond meanwhile held Ormond in check at Kilkenny, and prevented him from sending assistance to Dublin; and the Irish council were at once prostrate and helpless.

Henry VIII., on receipt of this intelligence, instead of sending Kildare to the block and equipping an army, condescended to write a letter of remonstrance to O'Connor. "A letter from the king!" said the insolent chieftain when it was brought to him, "what king! If I may live one year, I trust to see Ireland in that case that there shall be no more mention here of the King of England than of the King of Spain."³ Still, however, it was thought inconvenient to venture extremities. Henry allowed himself to make use of Kildare's assistance to soothe the immediate storm.⁴ An old desire of the Irish had been that some prince of the blood should govern them;⁵ he nominated, therefore, his natural son, the Duke of Richmond, as viceroy; and having no adequate force in Ireland to resist an insurrection, and no immediate means of despatching any such force, he was once more obliged to pardon and restore the traitorous Geraldine; appointing, at the same time, Sir William Skeffington, a moderately able man, though too old for duty, as the Duke of Richmond's deputy, and directing him to govern with the advice and co-operation of the Earl of Kildare.

To this disastrous weakness there was but one counterpoise—that the English party in the council of Ireland was strengthened by the appointment of John Allen to the archbishopric of Dublin and the office of chancellor. Allen was one of the many *ates* with letters of credence to Francis the French King, and to Charles the Emperor, proffering the help of Munster and Connaught towards the conquest of Ireland, if either of them would help to win it from our king. What precepts, what messages have been sent you to apprehend him? and yet not done. Why so? Forsooth I could not catch him. Yea, sir, it will be sworn and deposed to your face, that for fear of meeting him, you have winked, wilfully shunned his sight, altered your course, warned his friends, stopped both eyes and ears against his detection. Surely this juggling and false play little became an honest man called to such honour or a nobleman put in such trust."—CAMPION, p. 165.

¹ *State Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 146-7.

² Norfolk to Wolsey: *Ibid.* p. 135.

³ *Ibid.* p. 146.

⁴ It had been partially subdued by Lord James Butler.—Irish statute 28 Henry VIII. cap. 1.

⁵ O'Brien of Thomond to Henry VIII.: *State Papers*, vol. ii.

men of talent who owed their elevation to Wolsey. He was now sent over to keep watch on Kildare, and to supply the government with accurate information which might be relied upon as a ground for action. Till this time (and the fact is one which ought to be borne in mind), the government had been forced to depend for their knowledge of the state of the country either on the representations of the deputy, or the private accusations of his personal enemies; both of them exceedingly untrustworthy sources. Henceforward there runs a clear stream of light through the fog and night of confusion, furnished either by the archbishop or by Allen, Master of the Rolls, who was most likely his kinsman.

The policy of conciliation, if conduct so feeble deserves to be called a policy at all, had now reached its limit; and it amounted to confessed imbecility. Twice deposed from power on clear evidence of high treason, Lord Kildare was once more restored. It cost him but a little time to deliver himself of the presence of Skeffington; and in 1532 he was again sole deputy. All which the Earl of Surrey had foretold came to pass. Archbishop Allen was deprived of the chancellorship, and the Archbishop of Armagh, a creature of the Geraldines, was substituted in his place. Those noblemen and gentlemen who had lent themselves to the interests of the English in the earl's absence were persecuted, imprisoned, or murdered. They had ventured to be loyal from a belief in the assurances which had been made to them; but the government was far off and Kildare was near; and such of them as he condescended to spare "were now driven in self-defence, maugre their wills, to follow with the rest."¹ The wind which filled the sails of the ship in which Kildare returned, blew into flames the fires of insurrection; and in a very Saturnalia of Irish madness the whole people, with no object that could be discovered but for very delight in disorder itself, began to tear themselves to pieces. Lord Thomas Butler was murdered by the Geraldines; Kildare himself was shot through the body in a skirmish; Powerscourt was burnt by the O'Tooles; and Dublin Castle was sacked in a sudden foray by O'Brien Oge. O'Neile was out in the north; Desmond in the south; and the English pale was overrun by brigands.² Ireland had found its way into its ideal condition—that condition towards which its instincts perpetually tended, and which at length it had undisputedly reached. The Allens furnished the

¹ Report of 1533: *State Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 163-179.

² *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 180.

king with a very plain report of the effect of his leniency. They dwelt boldly on the mistakes which had been made. Re-echoing the words of the report of 1515, they declared that the only hope for the country was to govern by English deputies; and that to grudge the cost seemed "consonant to the nature of him that rather than he will depart with fourpence he will jeopard to lose twenty shillings—which fourpence, disbursed in time, might have saved the other."¹ They spoke well of the common Irish. "If well governed," they said, "the Irish would be found as civil, politic, and active, as any other nation. But what subjects under any prince in the world," they asked, "would love or defend the rights of that prince who, notwithstanding their true hearts and obedience, would afterwards put them under the governance of such as would persecute and destroy them?" Faith must be kept with those to whom promises had been made, and the habit of rewarding treason with concessions must be brought to an end. "Till great men suffer for their offences," they added, significantly, "your subjects within the English pale shall never live in quietness, nor stand sure of their goods and lives. Therefore, let your deputy have in commandment to do justice upon great thieves and malefactors, and to spare your pardons."²

These were but words, and such words had been already spoken too often to deaf ears; but the circumstances of the time were each day growing more perilous, and necessity, the true mother of statesmanship, was doing its work at last.

The winter months passed away, bringing only an increase of wretchedness. At length opened the eventful year of 1534, and Henry learnt that excommunication was hanging over him—that a struggle for life or death had commenced—and that the imperial armies were preparing to strike in the quarrel. From that time onward the King of England became a new man. Hitherto he had hesitated, temporised, delayed—not with Ireland only, but with the manifold labours which were thrust upon him. At last he was awake. And, indeed, it was high time. With a religious war apparently on the eve of explosion, he could ill tolerate a hotbed of sedition at his door; and Irish sedition was about to receive into itself a new element, which was to make it trebly dangerous.

Until that moment the disorders in Ireland had arisen out of a natural preference for anarchy. Every man's hand was against his neighbour, and the clans made war on each other only for

¹ *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 177.

² *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 192.

revenge and plunder and the wild delight of the game. These private quarrels were now to be merged in a single cause—a cause which was to lend a fresh stimulus to their hatred of England, and was at once to create and consecrate a national Irish spirit.

The Irish were eminently Catholic; not in the high sense of the word—for “the noble folk” could “oppress and spoil the prelates of the Church of Christ of their possessions and liberties” without particular scruple¹—but the country was covered with churches and monasteries in a proportion to the population far beyond what would have been found in any other country in Europe; and there are forms of superstition which can walk hand in hand with any depth of crime, when that superstition is provided with a talisman which will wash away the stains of guilt. The love of fighting was inherent, at the same time, in the Celtic nature. And such a people, when invited to indulge their humour in the cause of the church, were an army of insurrection ready made to the hands of the popes, the value of which their Holinesses were not slow to learn, as they have not been quick to forget.²

Henry was aware of the correspondence of Desmond with the emperor. He, perhaps, also expected that the fiction might be retorted upon him (as it actually was) which had been invented to justify the first conquest of the island. If Ireland was a fief of the pope, the same power which had made a present of it to Henry II. might as justly take it away from Henry VIII.; and the peril of his position roused him at length to an effort. It was an effort still clogged by fatality, and less than the emergency required: but it was a beginning, and it was something.

In February, 1534, a month before Clement pronounced his sentence, the Earl of Kildare was required, for the third and last time, to appear and answer for his offences; and a third time he ventured to obey. But England had become a changed world in the four years which had passed since his last presence there, and the brazen face and fluent lips were to serve him no more. On his arrival in London he was sent to the Tower, and discovered that he had overstepped his limits at last.³ He was

¹ *State Papers*, vol. iii. p. 10.

² It is remarkable that, as I believe, there is no instance of the act of heresy having been put in force in Ireland. The Irish Protestant church counts many martyrs; but they were martyrs who fell by murder in the later massacres. So far as I can learn, no Protestant was ever tried and executed there by form of law.

³ 28 Hen. VIII. cap. 1. Irish statutes.

now shrewd enough to see that if a revolt was contemplated no time was to be lost. He must play his last card, or his influence was gone for ever. Lord Thomas Fitzgerald, his eldest son, who in his boyhood had resided in England,¹ had been left as vice-deputy in his father's absence. The earl before his departure had taken precautions to place the fortresses of the pale, with the arms and ammunition belonging to the government, in the hands of dependents whom he could absolutely trust. No sooner was his arrest known than, in compliance with secret instructions which had been left with them, or were sent from England, his friends determined upon rebellion.²

The opportunity was well chosen. The government of Ireland was in disorder. Skeffington was designed for Kildare's successor, but he was not yet appointed; nor was he to cross the Channel till he had collected a strong body of troops, which was necessarily a work of time. The conditional excommunication of the king was then freshly published; and counsels, there is reason to think, were guiding the Irish movement, which had originated in a less distempered brain than that of an Irish chieftain. Rumours were flying in the southern counties in the middle of June that a Spanish invasion might be immediately looked for, and the emperor's chaplain was with the Earl of Desmond. His mission, it was said, was to prepare the way for an imperial army; and Desmond himself was fortifying Dungarvan, the port at which an invading force could most conveniently land.³ There is, therefore, a strong probability

¹ Cowley to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 198.

² Act of Attainder of the Earl of Kildare: 28 Hen. VIII. cap. i. The act is explicit that the rebellion was in consequence of Kildare discovering that the king would not again trust him; and that he had carefully prepared for it before he left Ireland.

³ Cork and Waterford continued loyal. The mayor of the latter place wrote, on the 12th of July, to Cromwell as follows: "This instant day, report is made by the Vicar of Dungarven, that the emperor hath sent certain letters unto the Earl of Desmond, by the same chaplain or ambassador that was sent to James the late earl. And the common bruit is, that his practice is to win the Geraltynes and the Breenes; and that the emperor intendeth shortly to send an army to invade the cities and towns by the sea coasts of this land. This thing was spoken by a Spaniard more than a month ago to one of the inhabitants of this city; and because I thought it then somewhat incredible, I forbore at that time to write unto your wisdom thereof. The chaplain arrived more than fifteen days past at the Dingle, in the dominion of the said Earl, which Earl hath, for the victualling of his castle of Dungarvan, taken a ship charged with Spanish wines, that was bound to the town of Galway; and albeit that his years requireth quietness and rest, yet intendeth he as much trouble as ever did any of his nation."—William Wise, Mayor of Waterford, to Cromwell, July 12, 1534: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 198.

that Charles V., who had undertaken to execute the papal sentence in the course of the summer, was looking for the most vulnerable point at which to strike; and, not venturing to invade England, was encouraging an Irish rebellion, with a view to following up his success if the commencement proved auspicious.¹

Simultaneously with the arrival of these unwelcome news, the English government were informed by letters from Dublin, that Lord Thomas Fitzgerald had thrown off his allegiance, and had committed infinite murders, burnings, and robberies in the English pale; making "his avaunt and boast that he was of the pope's sect and band, and that him he would serve, against the king and all his partakers; that the King of England

¹ On the 21st of July, O'Brien of Thomond wrote the following characteristic letter to Charles:—

Cornv O'Brien, Prince of Ireland, to the Emperor Charles V.,

"July 21, 1534.

"To the most sacred and most invincible Cæsar, Charles Emperor of the Romans, Most Catholic King of Spain, health with all submission.—Most sacred Cæsar, lord most clement, we give your Majesty to know that our predecessors for a long time quietly and peacefully occupied Ireland, with constancy, force, and courage, and without rebellion. They possessed and governed this country in manner royal, as by our ancient chronicles doth plainly appear. Our said predecessors and ancestry did come from your Majesty's realm of Spain, where they were of the blood of a Spanish prince, and many Kings of that lineage, in long succession, governed all Ireland happily, until it was conquered by the English. The last King of this land was of my blood and name; and ever since that time our ancestors, and we ourselves, have ceased not to oppose the English intruders; we have never been subject to English rule, or yielded up our ancient rights and liberties; and there is at this present, and for ever will be, perpetual discord between us, and we will harass them with continual war.

"For this cause, we, who till this present, have sworn fealty to no man, submit ourselves, our lands, our families, our followers, to the protection and defence of your Majesty, and of free will and deliberate purpose we promise to obey your Majesty's orders and commands in all honest behests. We will serve your Majesty with all our force; that is to say, with 1660 horse and 2440 foot, equipped and armed. Further, we will levy and direct for your Majesty's use 13,000 men, well armed with harquebuss, bows, arrows, and swords. We will submit to your Majesty's will and jurisdiction more than a hundred castles, and they and all else shall be at your Majesty's disposition to be employed as you shall direct.

"We can undertake also for the assistance and support of our good brother the Earl of Desmond, whose cousin, the daughter of the late Earl James, your Majesty's friend, is our wife.

"Our further pleasure will be declared to you by our servants and friends, Robert and Dominic de Paul, to whom your Majesty will deign to give credence. May your Majesty be ever prosperous.

"Written at our Castle at Clare, witness, our daughter, July 21, 1534 by your humble servant and unfailing friend,

"CORNV O'BRIEN, Prince of Ireland."

—MS. Archives at Brussels: *The Pilgrim*, pp. 175-6.

was accursed, and as many as took his part."¹ The signal for the explosion was given with a theatrical bravado suited to the novel dignity of the cause. Never before had an Irish massacre been graced by a papal sanction, and it was necessary to mark the occasion by unusual form. The young lord, Silken Thomas, as he was called, was twenty-one years old, an accomplished Irish cavalier. He was vice-deputy, or so he considered himself: and unwilling to tarnish the honour of his loyal house by any action which could be interpreted into treachery, he commenced with a formal surrender of his office, and a declaration of war. On the eleventh of June the council were sitting in St. Mary's abbey, when a galloping of horses was heard, and Lord Thomas, at the head of a hundred and forty of the young Geraldines, dashed up to the gate, and springing off his horse, strode into the assembly. The council rose, but he ordered them to sit still, and taking the sword of state in his hand, he spoke in Irish to the following effect:—

"However injuriously we be handled, and forced to defend ourselves in arms, when neither our service, nor our good meaning towards our prince's crown availeth, yet say not hereafter, but in this open hostility which we profess here, and proclaim, we have showed ourselves no villains nor churls, but warriors and gentlemen. This sword of state is yours, and not mine; I received it with an oath and have used it to your benefit. I should offend mine honour if I turned the same to your annoyance. Now I have need of mine own sword which I dare trust. As for this common sword, it flattereth me with a golden scabbard; but it hath in it a pestilent edge, and whetteth itself in hope of a destruction. Save yourselves from us, as from open enemies. I am none of Henry's deputy; I am his foe; I have more mind to conquer than to govern, to meet him in the field than to serve him in office. If all the hearts of England and Ireland that have cause thereto would join in this quarrel, as I trust they will, then should he be a byword, as I trust he shall, for his heresy, lechery, and tyranny; wherein the age to come may score him among the ancient princes of most abominable and hateful memory."² "With that," says Campion, "he rendered up his sword, adding to his shameful oration many other slanderous and foul terms."

Cromer, Lord Chancellor and Archbishop of Armagh, a creature of Kildare, "more like his parish priest or chaplain

¹ Cowley to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 198.

² CAMPION'S *History of Ireland*, p. 175. LELAND, vol. ii. p. 143.

than king's chancellor,"¹ who had been prepared beforehand, rose, and affected remonstrance; but, speaking in English, his words were not understood by the crowd. A bard in the Geraldine train cut short his speech with an Irish battle chant; and the wild troop rushed, shouting, out of the abbey, and galloped from the town.

In these mock heroics there need not have been anything worse than folly; but Irish heroism, like Irish religion, was unfortunately limited to words and feelings. The generous defiance in the cause of the Catholic faith was followed by pillage and murder, the usual accompaniments of Irish insurrection, as a sort of initial holocaust to propitiate success. The open country was at the mercy of the rebels. Fitzgerald, joined by O'Connor, proceeded to swear-in all such of the inhabitants of the pale as would unite against England; promising protection if they would consent, but inflicting fire and sword wherever he met refusal. The unfortunate people, warned by experience that no service was worse requited in Ireland than loyalty, had no spirit to resist. The few who were obnoxious were killed; the remainder submitted; and the growing corn was destroyed, and the farms were burnt, up to the gates of Dublin, that when the English army arrived, they might find neither food to maintain, nor houses to shelter them.² The first object of Fitzgerald, however, was to seize Dublin itself, where a portion of the citizens were in his favour. In the last week in July he appeared with his followers under the walls; a small force which had attempted to resist was defeated and driven in; and, under a threat of burning the city, if he was refused, he demanded the surrender of town and castle. The danger was immediate. The provident treachery of Kildare, in stripping the castle of its stores and cannon, had made defence all but impossible. Ormond was far off, and weeks must pass before relief could arrive from England. Sir John White, an English gentleman, with a handful of men-at-arms, had military command of the city; and the Archbishop of Armagh implored him to have pity on the citizens, and not to expose them to the consequences of a storm.³ White was too stout a soldier to listen to such timid counsels; yet his position was one of extreme difficulty; his little garrison was too weak to defend the lines of the town, without the assistance of the citizens, and the citizens were

¹ *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 168.

² Thomas Finglas to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 200.

³ Agard to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 245.

divided and dispirited. He resolved at length to surrender the city, and defend the castle to the last. Fitzgerald threatened that he would hold the townsmen responsible for the submission of the troops; but, savage as the English commander knew him to be, he calculated, with justice, that he would not ruin his popularity by cutting the throats of an unresisting crowd.

Hastily gathering together sufficient stores to enable him to hold out for a few weeks, and such arms and ammunition as could be collected in the emergency, White withdrew into the fortress, taking with him the Master of the Rolls, the Chief Baron, and such other of the council as desired to be his companions. The inhabitants of Dublin were then empowered to make terms with the rebels. The gates were opened on Fitzgerald's promise to respect life and property, the city was occupied, and siege was immediately laid to the castle. This was on the 27th of July. The morning which followed was marked by one of those atrocities which have so often unfortunately distinguished Irish rebellions. Archbishop Allen, to whose exertions the exposure of Kildare's proceedings had been principally due, either fearing the possible consequences to himself if the castle was taken, as the Irish writers say,¹ or more probably to hasten in person the arrival of the deputy and his troops, instead of remaining with White, volunteered to cross to England; and before the gates were opened, he went on board a vessel and dropped down the river. He had placed himself unknowingly in the hands of the traitors, for the ship was commanded by a Geraldine,² and in the night which followed was run aground at Clontarf, close to the mouth of the Liffey. The country was in possession of the insurgents, the crew were accomplices, and the stranded vessel, on the retreat of the tide, was soon surrounded. The archbishop was partly persuaded, partly compelled to go on shore, and was taken by two dependents of the Earl of Kildare to a farm house in the village of Artayne. Here he was permitted to retire to bed; but if he slept, it was for an early and a cruel waking. The news of his capture was carried to Fitzgerald, who was then in the city, but a few miles distant, and the young lord, with three of his uncles, was on the spot by day-break. They entered the house and ordered Allen to be brought before them. The archbishop was dragged from his bed; and in his shirt as he was, bare-legged and bare-headed, he dropt upon his knees, and begged for mercy. As well might the sheep have asked mercy of the famished wolf. He had but time

¹ LELAND, vol. ii. p. 145.

² Ibid.

to bequeath his soul to heaven, and his skull was cloven as he knelt; and, to make clean work, his chaplains, his servants, all of English blood who were with him, were slaughtered over his body.¹ Such was the pious offerings to God and holy church on which the sun looked down as it rose that fair summer's morning over Dublin Bay; and such were the men whose cause the Mores and the Fishers, the saintly monks of the Charterhouse and the holy martyrs of the Catholic faith, believed to be the cause of the Almighty Father of the world.

The morning's work was still but half-completed. To massacre a heretic archbishop was a meritorious, or at least a venial act; but it was desirable that an opinion in favour of it should be pronounced by authority; or that the guilt, if guilt there was, should be washed off without delay. The Archdeacon of Kells,² therefore, was despatched to the pope and to the emperor, to press the latter to send assistance on this happy success, and to bring back absolution from his Holiness,³ if the murder required it. The next object was to prevent news from reaching England before the castle should be taken. The river was watched, the timely assistance of an English pirate enabled Fitzgerald to blockade the bay; and Dublin was effectively sealed. But the report of the murder spread rapidly through Ireland. In three days it was known at Waterford, and the Prior of Kilmainham,⁴ who had taken refuge there, crossed into Wales on the instant, intending to ride post to London.⁵ He was delayed at St. David's by an attack of paralysis; but he sent forward a companion who had left Ireland with him; and the death of the archbishop was made known to Henry in the second week in August.

If Skeffington could set out on the instant, the castle might be saved, and Dublin recovered. Couriers were despatched to urge him to make haste; and others were sent to Ireland to communicate with Ormond, and, if possible, with the party in the castle. But Skeffington, who was too old for his work, had loitered over his preparations, and was not ready; and the delay

¹ Act of Attainder of the Earl of Kildare: 28 Henry VIII. cap. 1. The Prior of Kilmainham to Henry VIII.: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 501. CAMPION, p. 178.

² Call McGravyll, or Charles Reynolds: Act of Attainder, 28 Henry VIII. c. 1. CAMPION, p. 176.

³ Such, at least, one of Fitzgerald's attendants, who was present at the murder, understood to be one of the objects of the archdeacon's mission. (*State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 201, note.) The act of attainder says merely that he was sent to beg for assistance.

⁴ Rawson, one of the Irish Council.

⁵ *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 201.

would have been fatal, except for the Earl of Ormond, the loyalty of whose noble house at that crisis alone saved the English authority in Ireland. On the arrival of Henry's courier, he collected his people and invaded Kildare. The country was unenclosed—not a fence nor a hedge broke the broad surface of moor and meadow, save where at intervals a few small patches were enclosed for corn crops. Infinite herds of cattle grazed at will over the expanse of pasture, and these cattle were the chief dependence of the people. Ormond, by the suddenness of his inroad, and the absence of the owners, was enabled to sweep clear the whole tract which was occupied by the Geraldines; and Fitzgerald was forced to retire from Dublin to defend or recover his property. He left a detachment in the city, to prevent the troops in the castle from obtaining supplies,¹ and then hurried off to revenge the foray. Entering Carlow, he took a castle on the Slaney, and murdered the garrison. Thence he turned towards Kilkenny, and was bearing down upon Ormond with a strength which it would have been hard for the Butlers to resist, when he learnt that the citizens of Dublin, encouraged by the news that an English army was actually coming, had repented of their patriotism, and, to earn their pardon from Henry, had closed their gates, and had seized and imprisoned the party who were left before the castle. The prize for which he had played so deeply was slipping from his hands at the moment when it was all but won. He was forced to return in haste; but before he left Kilkenny, he made an effort to induce Ormond to join him. He promised, that if the earl would assist him in driving out the English, he would "take him as his father," that he would make a present to his son, Lord James, of half the inheritance of the Kildares, and that they two should together rule Ireland.²

Promises when extorted by presence of danger from a Geraldine were of indifferent value; but if Fitzgerald's engagements had been as sure as they were false and fleeting, they would have weighed little with this gallant old nobleman. Ormond replied, that if the rebels would lay down their arms and sue for mercy, they might perhaps find it; but for himself, "if his country were wasted, his castles won or prostrate, and himself exiled, yet would he never shrink to persevere in his duty to the king to the death."³ Failing here, and having at the same

¹ LELAND, vol. II. p. 146.

² Instructions to Walter Cowley to be declared to the King's Highness in behalf of the Earl of Ormond: *State Papers*, vol. II. p. 236.

³ *State Papers*, vol. II. p. 236. CAMPION, pp. 177-8.

time received a check in a skirmish, Fitzgerald next endeavoured to gain time. The Irish clans were gathering, but they were still at a distance, and his own presence was instantly required elsewhere. He offered a truce, therefore; and to this Ormond, being hard pressed by the Earl of Desmond, was ready to consent. But it was only treachery. Ormond broke up his camp, and his people were scattered; and within three days, O'Neile having joined Fitzgerald, he was taken at a disadvantage; his son, Lord James, was severely wounded; and a cordon of Irish being drawn round him, to prevent him from relieving Dublin, the rebel army hastened back to renew the siege.¹ They had the cannon with them which Kildare had taken from the castle,² but were happily ill-provided with ammunition, or resistance would have been desperate. The siege opened at the beginning of September. The month passed away, and the place was still untaken. If the deputy would only arrive, there was still time to save it. Each hour he was looked for, yet through these priceless days he was loitering at Beaumaris. From the fatality which has for ever haunted the dealings of English statesmen with Ireland, an old man past work, weak in health, and with all the moral deficiencies of a failing constitution, had been selected to encounter a dangerous rebellion. The insurrection had broken out in June; every moment was precious, the loss of a day might be the loss of the whole country; yet it was now the fourth of October; the ships were loaded; the horses were on board; they had been on board a fortnight, and were sickening from confinement. The wind was fair, at that critical season of the year a matter of incalculable importance. Yet Skeffington was still "not ready."³ All would have been lost

¹ M'Morrough, O'More, O'Connor, O'Brien, in September, with the greatest part of the gentlemen of the county of Kildare, were retained and sat at Carlow, Castledermot, Athye, Kilkea, and thereabout, with victualls during three weeks, to resist the Earl of Ossory from invading of the county of Kildare.—*State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 251.

² The rebel chiefly trusteth in his ordnance, which he hath of the king's.—Allen to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 202.

³ Allen, Master of the Rolls, had gone over to quicken his sluggish movements, and wrote from Chester to Cromwell, in despair: "Please your goodness to be advertised, that as yet the deputy is at Beaumaris, and the Northern men's horses have been on shipboard these twelve days, which is the danger of their destruction. They have lost such a wind and fair weather, as I doubt they shall not have again for this winter season. Mr. Brereton (Sir William Brereton, Skeffington's second in command) lieth here at the sea side in a readiness. If their first appointment to Dublin had been kept, they might have been there; but now they tarry to pass with the deputy. Sir, for the love of God, let some aid be sent to Dublin; for the loss of that city and the castle were the plain subversion of the land."—Allen to Cromwell, Oct. 4: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 202.

but for the Earl of Ormond. The city was at the last extremity, when he contrived to force his way through the Irish into Kildare; he again laid waste the country, and destroyed the newly-gathered harvests.¹ On the 14th of October Fitzgerald was forced finally to raise the siege, that his followers might save the remnant of their property from destruction. The relief was but just in time, for the resources of Dublin were exhausted. Before retreating, the rebel lord exacted from the corporation an engagement that at the end of six weeks they should either have procured his pardon from the king, with the deputation of Ireland for his life, or else should surrender the city. For the fulfilment of these insolent terms he took as pledges sixteen of the children of the most important families of the city, with three of the corporation themselves.²

And now, at length, on the same 14th of October, the English anchors were finally raised, and the deputy, with Sir William Brereton and Sir John Salisbury, several hundred Northumberland horse trained in the Border wars, and a number not specified, but probably from two to three thousand archers and men at-arms,³ were under way. Whether the blame of the delay lay with the incompetency of Skeffington, or the contempt of the English, which would not allow them to make haste into the presence of an enemy who never dared to encounter them in the field, but carried on war by perjury, and pillage, and midnight murder—whatever the cause was, they were at length on their way, and through the devotion of Ormond, not too late to be of use.

The fleet crossed the Channel in a single night, and the next morning were under Lambay Island,⁴ where they had run in for shelter. Here news was brought them that Dublin Castle was taken. They did not believe it; but a council of war was held, and Skeffington resolved that for himself he might not risk the attempt to land; Brereton and Salisbury might try it, if they could do so "without casting themselves away;" the deputy would go on to Waterford with the body of the army, and join Sir John St. Loo, who had crossed to that port in the week preceding, from Bristol.

Accordingly, on the morning of the 17th of October, Sir

¹ Instructions to Walter Cowley on behalf of the Earl of Ossory: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 251.

² Sir William Brereton to Henry VIII.: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 204.

³ Two thousand five hundred was the smallest number which Lord Surrey previously mentioned as sufficient to do good.—*Ibid.* p. 73.

⁴ Fifteen miles north of Dublin; immediately off Malahide.

William Brereton, with five hundred men, sailed into the mouth of the Liffey; and running up the river, instead of an enemy drawn up to oppose his landing, he found the mayor and corporation waiting at the quay, with drums, and flags, and trumpets to welcome him as a deliverer.¹

Skeffington was less successful; he remained under Lambay waiting for a wind for Waterford, and in the meantime Fitzgerald, hearing of the arrival of the fleet, was in force upon the hills overlooking the anchorage. The English commander, though aware that the insurgents were in the neighbourhood, allowed himself, with extreme imprudence, to land a detachment of troops, with directions to march to Dublin. He himself went with the fleet to the Skerries,² where he conceived, under false information, that a party of the rebels were lying. He found nothing there but a few fishing-boats; and while he was engaged in burning these, Fitzgerald attacked the division which had been sent on shore, and cut them off to a man. Nor was this the only misfortune. The pirate ships which had been watching Dublin Bay hovered round the fleet, cutting off straggling transports; and although one of them was chased and driven on shore, the small success poorly counterbalanced the injury which had been inflicted.³

After a week of this trifling, Skeffington consented to resign his intention of going to Waterford, and followed Brereton into Dublin. Why he had delayed a day after discovering that the river and the city were open to him, it is impossible to con-

¹ Sir William Brereton and Sir John Salisbury to Henry VIII.; *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 203.

² A small harbour near Drogheda.

³ Skeffington was prudently reserved in his report of these things to Henry. He mentions having set a party on shore, but says nothing of their having been destroyed; and he could not have been ignorant of their fate, for he was writing three weeks after it, from Dublin. He was silent, too, of the injury which he had received from the pirates, though eloquent on the boats which he burnt at the Skerries.—*State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 205. On first reading Skeffington's despatch, I had supposed that the "brilliant victory" claimed by the Irish historians (see *LELAND*, vol. ii. p. 148) must have been imaginary. The Irish Statute Book, however, is too explicit to allow of such a hope. "He [Fitzgerald] not only fortified and manned divers ships at sea, for keeping and letting, destroying and taking the king's deputy, army, and subjects, that they should not land within the said land; but also at the arrival of the said army, the same Thomas, accompanied with his uncles, servants, adherents, etc., falsely and traitorously assembled themselves together upon the sea coast, for keeping and resisting the king's deputy and army; and the same time they shamefully murdered divers of the said army coming to land. And Edward Rowkes, pirate at the sea, captain to the said Thomas, destroyed and took many of them.—Act of Attainder of the Earl of Kildare: 28 Hen. VIII. cap. x.

jecture. But his presence was of little benefit, and only paralysed his abler subordinates. As soon as he had brought his army into the city, he conceived that he had done as much as the lateness of the season would allow. The November weather having set in wild and wet, he gave up all thought of active measures till the return of spring; and he wrote to inform the king, with much self-approbation, that he was busy writing letters to the Irish chiefs, and making arrangements for a better government; that Lord Thomas Fitzgerald had been proclaimed traitor at the market-cross; and that he hoped, as soon as the chancellor and the vicar-general could come to an understanding, the said traitor might be pronounced excommunicated.¹ All this was very well, and we learn to our comfort that in due time the excommunication was pronounced; but it was not putting down the rebellion—it was not the work for which he was sent to Ireland with three thousand English soldiers.

Fitzgerald, as soon as the army was landed, retired into the interior; but finding that the deputy lay idle within the walls, he recovered heart, and at the head of a party of light horse re-appeared within six miles of Dublin. Trim and Dunboyne, two populous villages, were sacked and burnt, and the blazing ruins must have been seen from the battlements of the Castle. Yet neither the insults of the rebels nor the entreaty of the inhabitants could move the imperturbable Skeffington. He lay still within the city walls;² and Fitzgerald, still further encouraged, despatched a fresh party of ecclesiastics to the pope and the emperor, with offers of allegiance and promises of tribute,³ giving out meanwhile in Ireland that he would be supported in the spring or summer by the long talked-of Spanish army. Promises costing Charles V. nothing, he was probably

¹ Skeffington to Henry VIII.: *State Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 206-7.

² Accompanied with the number of sixty or eighty horsemen, and about three hundred kerne and gallowglass, the traitor came to the town of Trim, and there not only robbed the same, but also burnt a great part thereof, and took all the cattle of the country thereabouts; and after that assaulted Dunboyne, within six miles to Dublin; and the inhabitants of the town defending themselves by the space of two days, and sending for succour to Dublin . . . in default of relief, he utterly destroyed and burnt the whole town.—Allen to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 220.

³ He hath sent divers muniments and precedents which should prove that the king held this land of the See of Rome; alledging the king and his realm to be heretics digressed from the obedience of the same, and of the faith Catholic. Wherefore his desire is to the emperor and the Bishop of Rome, that they will aid him in defence of the faith Catholic against the king, promising that he will hold the said land of them, and pay tribute for the same yearly.—*Ibid.* p. 222.

liberal of them, and waited for the issue to decide how far they should be observed.

If this was so, the English deputy seemed to be determined to give the rebellion every chance of issuing as the emperor desired. The soldiers were eager for employment, but Skeffington refused to give his officers an opportunity for distinction in which he did not share,¹ and a few ineffectual skirmishes in the neighbourhood were the sole exploits which for five months they were allowed to achieve. One expedition, as far as Drogheda, the deputy indeed ventured, towards the end of November; and in the account of it which he sent to England, he wrote as if it were matter of congratulation that he had brought his army back in safety. Nor were his congratulations, at least to himself, without reason, for he owed that safety to God and to fortune. He had allowed the archers to neglect the old precaution of taking cases for their bows. They were overtaken by a storm, which wetted the strings and loosened the feathers of the arrows; and thus, at disadvantage, they were intercepted in a narrow defile,² and escaped only because the Irish were weak in numbers.

He excused himself for his shortcomings on the plea that he was in bad health—an adequate apology for his own inaction, but none for his appointment on a service so dangerous. Yet perhaps his failure is explained by the scene of it. Elsewhere, Sir William Skeffington may have been a gallant soldier and a reasonable man; but the fatal atmosphere of Ireland seems at all times to have had a power of prostrating English intellect. The Protector Cromwell alone was cased in armour which could defy its enchantments. An active officer might have kept the field without difficulty. The Master of the Rolls, to prove that the country, even in mid-winter, was practicable without danger, rode to Waterford in November with only three hundred horse, through the heart of the disturbed districts, and returned unmolested.³ The Earl of Ossory, with Sir John St. Loo, made an appointment to meet Skeffington at Kilcaa,⁴ where, if he brought cannon, they might recover the castles of the government which were held by the Geraldines. He promised to go, and he might have done so without danger or difficulty; but he neither went nor sent; only a rumour came that the deputy

¹ My lord deputy desireth so much his own glory, that he would no man should make an enterprise except he were at it.—*Ibid.* p. 227.

² Skeffington to Sir Edmund Walsingham: *Ibid.* p. 233.

³ Allen to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 220.

⁴ In Kildare county, on the frontiers of the pale.

was ill;¹ and in these delays and with this ostentation of imbecility, the winter passed away, as if to convince every wavering Irishman that, strong as the English might be in their own land, the sword dropped from their nerveless hands when their feet were on Irish soil. Nor was this the only or the worst consequence. The army, lying idle in Dublin, grew disorganised; many of the soldiers deserted; and an impression spread abroad that Henry, after all, intended to return to the old policy, to pardon Fitzgerald, and to restore him to power.²

The clear pen of the indefatigable Allen lays the state of affairs before us with the most painful distinctness. "My lord deputy," he wrote to Cromwell on the 16th of February, "now by the space of twelve or thirteen weeks hath continued in sickness, never once going out of his house; he as yet is not recovered. In the meantime the rebel hath burnt much of the country, trusting, if he may be suffered, to waste and desolate the Englishry, [and thus] to enforce this army to depart. Sirs, as I heretofore advertised you, this rebel had been banished out of all these parts or now, if all men had done their duties. But, to be plain with you, except there be a marshal appointed, which must do strait correction, and the army prohibited from resorting to Dublin (but ordered to keep the field), the king shall never be well served, but his purpose shall long be delayed."³

The wages, also, were ill-paid, though money in abundance had been provided. The men were mutinous, and indemnified themselves at the expense of the wretched citizens, whose houses

¹ The captains and I, the Earl (of Ossory) directed letters to the deputy to meet us in the county of Kildare, at Kilcaa, bringing with him ordnance accordingly, when the deputy appointed without fail to meet. At which day and place the said Earl, with the army (of) Waterford failed not to be, and there did abide three days continually for the deputy; where he, neither any of the army, came not, ne any letter or word was had from him; but only that Sir James Fitzgerald told that he heard say he was sick.—Ossory to W. Cowley; *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 251.

² Allen certainly thought so, or at least was unable to assure himself that it was not so. "My simple advice shall be," he wrote, "that if ever the king intend to show him grace (which himself demandeth not in due manner) and to pardon him, to withdraw his charges and to pardon him out of hand; or else to send hither a proclamation under the Great Seal of England, that the king never intends to pardon him ne any that shall take part with him, but utterly to prosecute both him and them to their utter confusion. For the gentlemen of the country hath said plainly to divers of the council, that until this be done, they dare not be earnest in resisting him, in doubt he should have his pardon hereafter, as his grandfather, his father, and divers his ancestors have had; and then would prosecute them for the same."—*State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 222.

³ Allen to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 226.

they pillaged at will under pretence that the owners were in league with the rebels.¹ The arms, also, which had been supplied to the troops, were of the worst kind: they had been furnished out of ordnance which had been long on hand, and were worthless.²

The conduct of the king, when the representations of Allen were laid before him, was very unlike what the popular conception of his character would have led us to expect. We imagine him impatient and irritable; and supposing him to have been (as he certainly was) most anxious to see the rebellion crushed, we should have looked for some explosion of temper; or, at least, for some imperious or arbitrary message to the unfortunate deputy. He contented himself, however, with calmly sending some one whom he could trust to make inquiries; and even when the result confirmed the language of the Master of the Rolls, and the deputy's recall was in consequence urged upon him, he still refused to pass an affront upon an old servant. He appointed Lord Leonard Grey, brother-in-law of the Countess of Kildare, chief marshal of the army; but he would not even send Grey over till the summer, and he left Skeffington an opportunity of recovering his reputation in the campaign which was to open with the spring.³ The army, however, was ordered to leave Dublin without delay; and the first move, which was made early in February, was followed by immediate fruits. Two of the pirates who had been acting with Fitzgerald were taken, and hanged.⁴ Several other offenders of note were also caught and thrown into prison; and in two instances, as if the human ministers of justice had not been sufficiently prompt, the higher powers thought fit to inflict the necessary punishment. John Teling, one of the archbishop's murderers, died of a foul disorder at Maynooth;⁵ and the Earl of Kildare, the contriver of the whole mischief, closed his evil career in the Tower of London "for thought and pain."⁶ He was attainted by the

¹ "Restraint must be had that this army shall not spoil ne rob any person, but as the deputy and council shall appoint; and that the captains be obedient to their orders, or it shall not be well. Ne it is not meet that every soldier shall make a man a traitor for to have his goods. They be so nusselled in this robbery, that now they almost will not go forth to defend the country, except they may have gain."—Allen to Cromwell, Feb. 16.

² "The bows which came out of the stores at Ludlow Castle were naught; many of them would not hold the bending."—*State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 228.

³ The king, a few months later, wrote to him a letter of warm thanks for his services, and admitted his plea of ill-health with peculiar kindness.—Henry VIII. to Skeffington: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 280.

⁴ Brabazon to Cromwell: *Ibid.* p. 224.

⁵ Allen to Cromwell: *Ibid.* p. 230.

⁶ CAMPION, p. 179.

parliament which sat in the autumn, and lay under sentence of death when death came unbidden to spare the executioner his labour.

Meantime, the spring opened at last, and affairs further improved. Skeffington's health continued weak; but with the advance of the season he was able to take the field; and on the 14th of March he appeared under the walls of Maynooth. This castle was the strongest in the possession of the Geraldines. Vast labour had been recently expended on its fortifications, for which the king's subjects had been forced to pay. It was defended by the ordnance from Dublin, and held by a small but adequate garrison. It was thought to be impregnable, and in the earlier stages of the science of gunnery it might possibly have defied the ordinary methods of attack. Nay, with a retrospective confidence in the strength of its defences, the Irish historians have been unable to believe that it could have been fairly taken; they insist that it resisted the efforts of the besiegers, and was on the point of being saved by Fitzgerald,¹ when it was delivered to the English commander by treachery. A despatch to the king, which was written from the spot, and signed by the deputy and all the members of the Irish council, leaves but little remaining of this romance.

An authentic account of an attack by cannon on a fortified place at that era, will scarcely fail to be interesting. The castle, says this document, was so strongly defended both with men and ordnance, "as the like had not been seen in Ireland since the Conquest." The garrison consisted of a hundred men, of which sixty were gunners. On the third day of the siege the English batteries opened on the north-west side of the donjon, and destroying the battlements, buried the cannon on that part of the wall under the ruins. The siege lines were then moved "to the north side of the base court of the castle, at the north-east end whereof there was a new-made, very strong, and fast bulwark, well garrisoned with men and ordnance." Here a continual fire was sustained for five days, "on that wise that a breach and entry was made there." Whereupon, continues the despatch, "The twenty-third day, being Tuesday next before Easter day, there was a galiard assault given before five o'clock in the morning, and the base court entered; at which entry there were slain of the ward of the castle about sixty, and of your Grace's army no more but John Griffin, yeoman of your most honourable guard, and six others which were killed with

¹ LELAND, COXE, WARE.

ordnance of the castle at the entry. Howbeit, if it had not pleased God to preserve us, it were to be marvelled that we had no more slain. After the base court was thus won, we assaulted the great castle, which within a while yielded." Thirty-seven of the remaining garrison were taken prisoners, with two officers, two Irish ecclesiastics who had distinguished themselves in promoting the insurrection, and one of the murderers of the archbishop.

The place was taken by fair fighting, it seems, without need of treachery; and the capture by storm of a fortified castle was a phenomenon altogether new to the Irish, who had yet to learn the effect of well-served cannon upon walls.¹

The work at length was begun in earnest, and in order to drive the lesson home into the understanding of the people, and to instruct them clearly that rebellion and murder were not any longer to be tolerated, the prisoners were promptly brought up before the provost-marshal, and twenty-six of them there and then, under the ruins of their own den, were hung up for sign to the whole nation.²

A judicial operation of this kind had never before been witnessed in Ireland within the known cycle of its history, and the effect of it was proportionately startling. In the presence of this "Pardon of Maynooth," as it was called, the phantom of rebellion vanished on the spot. It was the first serious blow which was struck in the war, and there was no occasion for a second. In a moment the noise and bravado which had roared from Donegal to Cork was hushed into a supplication for forgiveness. Fitzgerald was hastening out of Thomond to the relief of his fortress. When they heard of the execution, his

¹ Henry VIII. was one of the first men to foresee and value the power of artillery. Sebastiani mentions experiments on the range of the power which were made by him, in Southampton water; and it is likely that the cannon used in the siege of Maynooth were the large-sized brass guns which were first cast in England in the year of its capture.—Stow, p. 572. When the history of artillery is written, Henry VIII.'s labours in this department must not be forgotten. Two foreign engineers whom he tempted into his service, first invented "shells." "One Peter Baud, a Frenchman born," says Stow, "and another alien, called Peter Van Collen, a gunsmith, both the king's feed men, conferring together, devised and caused to be made certain mortar pieces, being at the mouth from eleven inches unto nineteen inches wide, for the use whereof they [also] caused to be made certain hollow shot of cast iron, to be stuffed with fire-work or wildfire; whereof the bigger sort for the same had screws of iron to receive a match to carry fire kindled, that the firework might be set on fire for to break in pieces the same hollow shot, whereof the smallest piece hitting any man would kill or spoil him."—Stow, *Chronicle*, p. 384.

² *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 237.

army melted from him like a snowdrift. The confederacy of the chiefs was broken up; first one fell away from it, and then another; and before the summer had come, O'Brien of Inchiquin, O'Connor, who had married Fitzgerald's sister, and the few scattered banditti of the Wicklow mountains, were all who remained of the grand association which was to place the Island of Saints at the feet of the Father of Christendom.

Sadder history in the compass of the world's great chronicle there is none than the history of the Irish: so courageous, yet so like cowards; so interesting, yet so resolute to forfeit all honourable claims to interest. In thinking of them, we can but shake our heads with Lord Chancellor Audeley, when meditating on this rebellion, and repeat after him, "they be a people of strange nature, and of much inconstancy."¹

Lord Fitzgerald was now a fugitive, with a price upon his head. He retreated into Thomond, intending to sail for Spain, and to attempt with his own lips to work persuasion with the emperor.² There was an expectation, however, that the Spaniards might be already on their way; and O'Brien persuaded him to remain, to prevent the complete disintegration of his party. Sir James de la Hyde was therefore sent to Charles; and the wretched young nobleman himself wandered from place to place, venturing, while Skeffington still lay at Maynooth, into the neighbourhood of his home, among his own people, yet unable to do more than evade the attempts which were made to capture him. The life of the rebellion was gone from it.

There was no danger that he would be betrayed. The Irish had many faults—we may not refuse them credit for their virtues. However treacherous they were to their enemies, however inconstant in their engagements, uncertain, untrue in ordinary obligations, they were without rivals in the world in their passionate attachments among themselves; and of all the chiefs who fell from Fitzgerald's banner, and hastened with submission to the English deputy, there was perhaps not one who, though steeped in the blood of a hundred murders, would not have been torn limb from limb rather than have listened to a temptation to betray him.

At length, after a narrow escape from a surprise, from which he rescued himself only by the connivance of the Irish kerne who were with the party sent to take him, the young earl, as he now called himself, weary of his wandering life, and when no Spaniards came, seeing that his cause was for the present hope-

¹ *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 446.

² *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 253.

less, offered to surrender. It was by this time August, and Lord Leonard Grey, his father's brother-in-law, was present with the army. To him he wrote from O'Connor's Castle, in King's County, apologising for what he had done, desiring pardon "for his life and lands," and begging his kinsman to interest himself in his behalf. If he could obtain his forgiveness, he promised to deserve it. If it was refused, he said that he "must shift for himself the best that he could."¹

In reply to this overture, Grey suggested an interview. The appointment of so near a relative of the Kildares to high office in Ireland, had been determined, we may be sure, by the Geraldine influence in the English council. The marshal was personally acquainted with Fitzgerald, and it is to be observed that the latter in writing to him signed himself his "loving friend." That Lord Leonard was anxious to save him does not admit of a doubt; he had been his father's chief advocate with the king, and his natural sympathy with the representative of an ancient and noble house was strengthened by family connection. He is not to be suspected, therefore, of treachery, at least towards his kinsman. The interview was agreed upon, and on the eighteenth of August, Grey, with Sir Rice Mansell, Chief Justice Aylmer, Lord James Butler, and Sir William St. Loo, rode from Maynooth into King's County, where, on the borders of the Bog of Allen, Fitzgerald met them. Here he repeated the conditions upon which he was ready to surrender. Lord Grey said that he had no authority to entertain such conditions; but he encouraged the hope that an unconditional surrender would tell in his favour, and he promised himself to accompany his prisoner to the king's presence. Fitzgerald interpreting expressions confessedly intended "to allure him to yield,"² in the manner most favourable to himself, placed himself in the hands of the marshal, and rode back with him to the camp.

The deputy wrote immediately to announce the capture. Either the terms on which it had been effected had not been communicated to him, or he thought it prudent to conceal them,

¹ Lord Thomas Fitzgerald to Lord Leonard Grey: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 273.

² The Lord Leonard repayreth at this season to your Majesty, bringing with him the said Thomas, beseeching your Highness most humbly, that according to the comfort of his words spoken to the said Thomas to allure him to yield him, ye would be merciful to the said Thomas; especially concerning his life.—The Council of Ireland to Henry VIII.: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 275.

for he informed Henry that the traitor had yielded without conditions, either of pardon, life, lands, or goods, "but only submitting to his Grace's mercy."¹ The truth, however, was soon known; and it occasioned the gravest embarrassment. How far a government is bound at any time to respect the unauthorised engagements of its subordinates, is one of those intricate questions which cannot be absolutely answered;² and it was still less easy to decide, where the object of such engagements had run a career so infamous as Lord Thomas Fitzgerald. No pirate who ever swung on a well-earned gallows had committed darker crimes, and the king was called upon to grant a pardon in virtue of certain unpermitted hopes which had been held out in his name. He had resolved to forgive no more noble traitors in Ireland, and if the archbishop's murder was passed over, he had no right to affect authority in a country where he was so unable to exert it. On the other hand, the capture of so considerable a person was of great importance; his escape abroad, if he had desired to leave the country, could not have been prevented; and while the government retained the benefit which they derived from his surrender, their honour seemed to be involved in observing the conditions, however made, by which it had been secured.

It is likely, though it is not certain, that Lord Leonard foresaw the dilemma in which Henry would be placed, and hoped by means of it to secure the escape of his kinsman. His own ultimate treason throws a shadow on his earlier loyalty; and his talent was fully equal to so ingenious a fraud. He had placed the king in a position from which no escape was possible that was not open to grave objection. To pardon so heavy an offender was to violate the first duty of government, and to grant a general licence to Irish criminality; to execute him was to throw a shadow indirectly on the king's good faith, and lay his generals open to a charge of treachery. Henry resolved to err on the side on which error was least injurious. The difficulty was submitted to the Duke of Norfolk, as of most experience in Irish matters. The duke advised that execution should be delayed; but added significantly, "*quod defertur non aufertur*."—Pardon was not to be thought of; the example

¹ *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 274.

² The conditions promised to Napoleon by the captain of the *Bellerophon* created a similar difficulty. If Nana Sahib had by any chance been connected by marriage with an English officer, and had that officer induced him to surrender by a promise of pardon, would the English Government have respected that promise?

would be fatal.¹ Immediate punishment would injure the credit of Lord Grey, and would give occasion for slander against the council.² The best course would be to keep "the traitor" in safe prison, and execute him, should it seem good, at a future time.³ This advice was followed. Fitzgerald, with his uncles, who had all been implicated in the insurrection, was committed to the Tower; and in the year following they were hanged at Tyburn.

So ended the rebellion in Ireland; significant chiefly because it was the first in which an outbreak against England assumed the features of a war of religion, the first which the pope was especially invited to bless, and the Catholic powers, as such, to assist. The features of it, on a narrow scale, were identical with those of the later risings. Fostered by the hesitation of the home authorities, it commenced in bravado and murder; it vanished before the first blows of substantial resistance. Yet the suppression of the insurrection was attended by the usual Irish fatality—mistake and incompleteness followed the proceedings from the beginning to the end; and the consciousness remained that a wound so closed would not heal, that the moral temper of the country remained unaffected, and that the same evils would again germinate.

¹ It were the worst example that ever was; and especially for these ungracious people of Ireland.—Norfolk to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 276.

² *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 276.

³ Ibid. The duke, throughout his letter, takes a remarkably business-like view of the situation. He does not allow the question of "right" to be raised, or suppose at all that the government could lie under any kind of obligation to a person in the position of Fitzgerald.

CHAPTER IX

THE CATHOLIC MARTYRS

WHILE the disturbance in Ireland was at its height, affairs in England had been scarcely less critical. The surface indeed remained unbroken. The summer of 1534 passed away, and the threatened invasion had not taken place. The disaffection which had appeared in the preceding year had been smothered for a time; Francis I. held the emperor in check by menacing Flanders, and through French influence the rupture with Scotland had been seemingly healed. In appearance the excommunication had passed off as a *brutum fulmen*, a flash of harmless sheet lightning, serving only to dazzle feeble eyes. The oath of succession, too, had been taken generally through the country; Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher having alone ventured to refuse. The pope had been abjured by the universities and by the convocation in both the provinces, and to these collective acts the bishops and the higher clergy had added each their separate consent.

But the government knew too well the temper of the clergy to trust to outward compliance, or to feel assured that they acquiesced at heart either in the separation from Rome, or in the loss of their treasured privileges. The theory of an Anglican Erastianism found favour with some of the higher church dignitaries, and with a section perhaps of the secular priests; but the transfer to the crown of the first-fruits, which in their original zeal for a free Church of England, the ecclesiastics had hoped to preserve for themselves, the abrupt limitation of the powers of convocation, and the termination of so many time-honoured and lucrative abuses, had interfered with the popularity of a view which might have been otherwise broadly welcomed; and while growing vigorously among the country gentlemen and the middle classes in the towns, among the clergy it thrived only within the sunshine of the court. The rest were overawed for the moment, and stunned by the suddenness of the blows which had fallen upon them. As far as they thought at all, they believed that the storm would be but of brief dura-

tion, that it would pass away as it had risen, and that for the moment they had only to bend. The modern Englishman looks back upon the time with the light of after history. He has been inured by three centuries of division to the spectacle of a divided church, and sees nothing in it either embarrassing or fearful. The ministers of a faith which had been for fifteen centuries as the seamless vesture of Christ, the priests of a church supposed to be founded on the everlasting rock against which no power could prevail, were in a very different position. They obeyed for the time the strong hand which was upon them, trusting to the interference of accident or providence. They comforted themselves with the hope that the world would speedily fall back into its old ways, that Christ and the saints would defend the church against sacrilege, and that in the meantime there was no occasion for them to thrust themselves upon voluntary martyrdom.¹ But this position, natural as it was, became difficult to maintain when they were called upon not only themselves to consent to the changes, but to justify their consent to their congregations, and to explain to the people the grounds on which the government had acted. The kingdom was by implication under an interdict,² yet the services went on as usual; the king was excommunicated; doubt hung over the succession; the facts were imperfectly known; and the never-resting friars mendicant were busy scattering falsehood and misrepresentation. It was of the highest moment that on all these important matters the mind of the nation should if possible be set at rest; and the clergy, whose loyalty was presumed rather than trusted, furnished the only means by which the government could generally and simultaneously reach the people. The clergy therefore, as we have seen, were called upon for their services; the pope's name was erased from the mass books; the statute of appeals and the statute of succession were fixed against the doors of every parish church in England, and the rectors and curates were directed every week in their sermons

¹ "These be no causes to die for," was the favourite phrase of the time. It was the expression which the Bishop of London used to the Carthusian monks (*Historia Martyrum Anglorum*), and the Archbishop of York in his diocese generally.—ELLIS, third series, vol. ii. p. 375.

² Si Rex Præfatus, vel alii, inhibitioni ac prohibitioni et interdicto hujusmodi contravenerint, Regem ipsum ac alios omnes supradictorum sententias censuras et pœnas prædictas ex nunc prout ex tunc incurrisse declaramus, et ut tales publicari ac publice nunciari et evitari—ac interdictum per totum regnum Angliæ sub dictis pœnis observari debere, volumus atque mandamus.—*First Brief of Clement*: LEGRAND, vol. iii. pp. 451-52. The Church of Rome, however, draws a distinction between a sentence implied and a sentence directly pronounced.

to explain the meaning of these acts. The bishops were held responsible for the obedience of the clergy; the sheriffs and the magistrates had been directed to keep an eye upon the bishops; and all the machinery of centralisation was put in force to compel the fulfilment of a duty which was well known to be unwelcome.

That as little latitude as possible might be left for resistance or evasion, books were printed by order of council, and distributed through the hands of the bishops, containing a minute account of the whole proceedings on the divorce, the promises and falsehoods of the pope, the opinions of the European universities, and a general epitome of the course which had been pursued.¹ These were to be read aloud to the congregations; and an order for preaching was at the same time circulated, in which the minuteness of the directions is as remarkable as the prudence of them. Every preacher was to deliver one sermon at least ("and after at his liberty") on the encroachments and usurpations of the papal power. He was to preach against it, to expose and refute it to the best of his ability, and to declare that it was done away, and might neither be obeyed nor defended further. Again in all places "where the king's just cause in his matter of matrimony had been detracted, and the incestuous and unjust [matrimony] had been set forth [and extolled]," the clergy were generally directed "to open and declare the mere verity and justness" of the matter, declaring it "neither doubtful nor disputable, but to be a thing of mere verity, and so to be allowed of all men's opinions. They were to relate in detail the pope's conduct, his many declarations in the king's favour; the first decretal, which was withheld by Campeggio, in which he had pronounced the marriage with Catherine invalid; his unjust avocation of the cause to Rome; his promises to the King of France; and finally, his engagement at Marseilles to pronounce in the King of England's favour, if only he would acknowledge the papal jurisdiction.² They were therefore to represent the king's conduct as the just and neces-

¹ STRYPE's *Memorials*, vol. i. p. 292. ELLIS, third series, vol. ii. p. 336.

² It is remarkable that in this paper it seems to be assumed, that the pope would have fulfilled this engagement if Henry had fully submitted. "He openly confessed," it says, "that our master had the right; but because our prince and master would not prejudicate for his jurisdictions, and uphold his usurped power by sending a proctor, ye may evidently here see that this was only the cause why the judgment of the Bishop of Rome was not given in his favour; whereby it may appear that there lacked not any justice in our prince's cause, but that ambition, vain glory, and too much mundanity were the lets thereof."

sary result of the pope's duplicity. These things the clergy were required to teach, not as matters of doubt and question, but as vital certainties on which no difference of opinion could be tolerated. Finally, there were added a few wholesome admonitions on other subjects, which mark the turning of the tide from Catholic orthodoxy. The clergy were interdicted from indulging any longer in the polemics of theology. "To keep unity and quietness in the realm it" was "ordained that no preachers" should "contend openly in the pulpit one against another, nor uncharitably deprave one another in open audience. If any of them" were "grieved one with another," they were to "complain to the King's Highness or the archbishop or bishop of the diocese." They were "purely, sincerely, and justly" to "preach the scripture and words of Christ, and not mix them with men's institutions, or make men believe that the force of God's law and man's law was the like." On subjects such as purgatory, worship of saints and relics, marriage of the clergy, justification by faith, pilgrimages and miracles, they were to keep silence for one whole year, and not to preach at all.¹

These instructions express distinctly the convictions of the government. It would have been well if the clergy could have accepted them as they were given, and submitted their understandings once for all to statesmen who were wiser than themselves. The majority (of the parish clergy at least) were perhaps outwardly obedient; but the surveillance which the magistrates were directed to exercise proves that the exceptions were expected to be extensive; and in many quarters these precautions themselves were rapidly discovered to be inadequate. Several even of the most trusted among the bishops attempted an obstructive resistance. The clergy of the north were notoriously disobedient. The Archbishop of York was reported to have talked loosely of "standing against" the king "unto death."² The Bishop of Durham fell under suspicion, and was summoned to London. His palace was searched and his papers examined in his absence; and the result, though inconclusive, was unsatisfactory.³ The religious orders again (especially the monks of such houses as had been implicated with the Nun of Kent) were openly recusant. At the convent of Sion, near Richmond, a certain Father Ricot preached as he was com-

¹ An Order for Preaching: printed in BURNET's *Collectanea*, p. 447.

² ELLIS, third series, vol. ii. p. 373.

³ John ap Rice to Secretary Cromwell, with an account of the search of the Bishop of Durham's chamber: *Rolls House MS.*

manded, "but he made this addition, that he which commanded him to preach should discharge his conscience: and as soon," it was said, "as the said Ricot began to declare the king's title," "nine of the brethren departed from the sermon, contrary to the rule of their religion, to the great slander of the audience."¹ Indeed it soon became evident that among the regular clergy no compliance whatever was to be looked for; and the agents of the government began to contemplate the possible consequences, with a tenderness not indeed for the prospective sufferers, but for the authorities whom they would so cruelly compel to punish them. "I am right sorry," wrote Cromwell's secretary to him, "to see the foolishness and obstinacy of divers religious men, so addict to the Bishop of Rome and his usurped power, that they contemn counsel as careless men and willing to die. If it were not for the opinion which men had, and some yet have, in their apparent holiness, it made no great matter what became of them, so their souls were saved. And for my part, I would that all such obstinate persons of them as be ready to die for the advancement of the Bishop of Rome's authority were dead indeed by God's hand, that no man should run wrongfully into obloquy for their just punishment."²

But the open resistance of mistaken honesty was not the danger which the government most feared. Another peril threatened their authority, deeper and more alarming by far. The clergy possessed in the confessional a power of secret influence over the masses of the people, by which they were able at once (if they so pleased) to grant their penitents licences for insincerity, to permit them to perjure themselves under mental reservations, and to encourage them to expiate a venial falsehood by concealed disaffection. The secrets of confession were inviolable. Anathemas the most fearful forbade their disclosure; and, secured behind this impenetrable shield, the church might defy the most stringent provisions, and baffle every precaution.

From the nature of the case but little could transpire of the use or the abuse which was made at such a time of so vast a power; but Cromwell, whose especial gift it was to wind himself into the secrets of the clergy, had his sleuth-hounds abroad,

¹ Bedyll to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 422. Bedyll had been directed by Cromwell to observe how the injunctions were obeyed. He said that he was "in much despair of the reformation of the friars by any gentle or favourable means;" and advised, "that fellows who leave sermons should be put in prison, and made a terrible example of."

² *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 422, et seq.

whose secret was not easily baffled. The long tyranny of the priesthood produced also its natural retribution in the informations which were too gladly volunteered in the hour of revenge; and more than one singular disclosure remains among the *State Papers*, of language used in this mysterious intercourse. Every man who doubted whether he might lawfully abjure the pope, consulted his priest. Haughton, the Prior of Charterhouse, in all such cases, declared absolutely that the abjuration might not be made.¹ He himself refused openly; and it is likely that he directed others to be as open as himself. But Haughton's advice was as exceptional as his conduct. Father Forest, of Greenwich, who was a brave man, and afterwards met nobly a cruel death, took the oath to the king as he was required; while he told a penitent that he had abjured the pope in the outward, but not in the inward man, that he "owed an obedience to the pope which he could not shake off," and that it was "his use and practice in confession, to induce men to hold and stick to the old fashion of belief."²

Here, again, is a conversation which a treacherous penitent revealed to Cromwell; the persons in the dialogue being the informer, John Staunton, and the confessor of Sion Monastery, who had professed the most excessive loyalty to the crown.³ The informer, it must be allowed, was a good-for-nothing person. He had gone to the confessor, he said, to be shriven, and had commenced his confession with acknowledging "the seven deadly sins particularly," "and next the misspending of his five wits." As an instance of the latter, he then in detail had confessed to heresy; he could not persuade himself that the priest had power to forgive him. "Sir," he professed to have said to the confessor, "there is one thing in my stomach which grieveth my conscience very sore; and that is by reason of a sermon I heard yesterday of Master Latimer, saying that no man of himself had authority to forgive sins, and that the pope had no more authority than another bishop; and therefore I am in doubt whether I shall have remission of my sins of you or not, and that the pardon is of no effect."

¹ STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. i. p. 305.

² Confessions of Father Forest: *Rolls House MS.* This seems to have been generally known at the time. Latimer alludes to it in one of his sermons.

³ "The confessor can do no good with them (the monks), and the obstinate persons be not in fear of him; but he in great fear and danger of his life, by reason of their malice, for that he hath consented to the king's title, and hath preached the same."—Bedyll to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 424.

The priest answered, "That Latimer is a false knave;" and seven or eight times he called him false knave, and said he was an eretycke. "Marry, this I heard Latimer say," the confessor continued, "that if a man come to confession, and be not sorry for his sins, the priest hath no power to forgive him. I say the pope's pardon is as good as ever it was; and he is the Head of the Universal Church, and so I will take him. Here in England the king and his parliament hath put him out; but be of good comfort, and steadfast in your faith; this thing will not last long, I warrant you. You shall see the world change shortly."

To this the informer said that he had replied, "You know how that we be sworn unto the King's Grace, and he hath already abjured the pope."

"As for that," said the priest, "an oath loosely made may be loosely broken; and by this example be ye in ease. I had an enemy come unto this church, and one of his friends and mine came unto me and said, 'Sir, I pray you let us go drink with yonder man.' And the said friend maketh such importunate suit unto me to drink with my enemy, that I promise him by my faith that I will go and drink with him; and so indeed doth drink with him. But what then," said the priest; "though I go and drink with him upon this promise, trow you that I will forgive him with my heart. Nay, nay, I warrant you. And so in like wise in this oath concerning the abjuration of the pope. I will not abjure him in my heart," said the priest, "for these words were not spoken unto Peter for nought—'I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven'—and the pope is Peter's successor. Of this matter," said the priest, "I communed once with the Bishop of Canterbury,¹ and I told the bishop I would pray for the pope as the chief and papal head of Christ's church. And the bishop told me it was the king's pleasure that I should not. I said unto him I would do it; and though I did it not openly, yet would I do it secretly. And he said I might pray for him secretly, but in any wise do it not openly."²

Trifles of this kind may seem unimportant; but at the time they were of moment, for their weight was cumulative; and we can only now recover but a few out of many. Such as they are,

¹ Cranmer: but we will hope the story is coloured. It is characteristic, however, of the mild, tender-hearted man who desired to glide round difficulties rather than scale and conquer them.

² A Deposition concerning the popish Conduct of a Priest: *Rolls House MS.*

however, they show the spirit in which the injunctions were received by a section at least of the English clergy. Nor was this the worst. We find language reported, which shows that many among the monks were watching for symptoms of the promised imperial invasion, and the progress of the Irish insurgents. A Doctor Maitland, of the order of Black Friars in London, had been "heard divers times to say, he trusted to see every man's head that was of the new learning, and the maintainers of them, to stand upon a stake, and Cranmer's to be one of them. The king," he hoped, might suffer "a violent and shameful death;" and "the queen, that mischievous whore, might be brent." "He said further, that he knew by his science, which was nigromancy, that all men of the new learning should be suppressed and suffer death, and the *people of the old learning should be set up again by the power of the king's enemies from the parts beyond the sea.*"¹

In the May weather of 1534, two Middlesex clergy, "walking to and fro in the cloyster garden at Sion, were there overheard compassing sedition and rebellion." John Hale, an eager, tumultuous person, was prompting his brother priest, Robert Feron, with matter for a pamphlet, which Feron was to write against the king.² "Syth the realm of England was first a realm," said Hale, "was there never in it so great a robber and piller of the commonwealth read of nor heard of as is our king. . . . He is the most cruellst capital heretic, defacer and treader under foot of Christ and of his church, continually applying and minding to extinct the same; whose death, I beseech God, may be like to the death of the most wicked John, sometime king of this realm, or rather to be called a great tyran than a king; and that his death may be not much unlike to the end of that man-queller Richard, sometime usurper of this imperial realm. And if thou wilt deeply look upon his life, thou shalt find it more foul and more stinking than a sow wallowing and defiling herself in any filthy place."

These words were spoken in English; Feron translated them into Latin, and wrote them down. Hale then continued: "Until the king and the rulers of this realm be plucked by the pates, and brought, as we say, to the pot, shall we never live merrily in England, which, I pray God, may chance, and now

¹ Information given by John Maydwell, of treasonable Words spoken against Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn: *Rolls House MS.*

² In this instance we need not doubt that the words were truly reported, for the offenders were tried and pleaded guilty.

shortly come to pass. Ireland is set against him, which will never shrink in their quarrel to die in it; and what think ye of Wales? The noble and gentle Ap Ryce,¹ so cruelly put to death, and he innocent, as they say, in the cause. *I think not contrary, but they will join and take part with the Irish, and so invade our realm. If they do so, doubt ye not but they shall have aid and strength enough in England. For this is truth: three parts of England be against the king, as he shall find if he need. For of truth, they go about to bring this realm into such miserable condition as is France; which the commons see, and perceive well enough a sufficient cause of rebellion and insurrection in this realm. And truly we of the church shall never live merrily until that day come.*"²

These informations may assist us in understanding, if we cannot forgive, the severe enactments—severely to be executed—which were passed in the ensuing parliament.

It is a maxim of sound policy, that actions only are a proper subject of punishment—that to treat men as offenders for their words, their intentions, or their opinions, is not justice, but tyranny. But there is no rule which is universally applicable. The policy of a state of war is not the policy of a state of peace. And as a soldier in a campaign is not at liberty to criticise openly the cause for which he is fighting; as no general, on his army going into action, can permit a subordinate to decline from his duty in the moment of danger, on the plea that he is dissatisfied with the grounds of the quarrel, and that his conscience forbids him to take part in it; so there are times when whole nations are in a position analogous to that of an army so circumstanced; when the safety of the State depends upon unity of purpose, and when private persons must be compelled to reserve their opinions to themselves; when they must be compelled neither to express them in words, nor to act upon them

¹ The conspiracy of "young Ryce," or Richard ap Griffyth, is one of the most obscure passages in the history of this reign. It was a Welsh plot, conducted at Islington. [Act of Attainder of Richard ap Griffyth, 23 Hen. VIII. cap. 24.] The particulars of it I am unable to discover further, than that it was a desperate undertaking, encouraged by the uncertainty of the succession, and by a faith in prophecies (Confession of Sir William Neville: *Rolls House MS.*), to murder the king. Ryce was tried in Michaelmas term, 1531, and executed. His uncle, who passed under the name of Brancetor, was an active revolutionary agent on the Continent in the later years of Henry's reign.—See *State Papers*, vol. iv. pp. 647, 651, 653; vol. viii. pp. 219, 227, etc.

² Trial and Conviction of John Feron, clerk, and John Hale, clerk: BAGA DE SECRETIS; Appendix II. to the *Third Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records*.

in their capacity of citizens, except at their utmost peril. At such times the *salus populi* overrides all other considerations; and the maxims and laws of calmer periods for awhile consent to be suspended. The circumstances of the year 1848 will enable us, if we reflect, not upon what those circumstances actually were, but on what they easily might have been, to understand the position of Henry VIII.'s government at the moment of the separation from Rome. If the danger in 1848 had ceased to be imaginary—if Ireland had broken into a real insurrection—if half the population of England had been Socialist, and had been in secret league with the leaders of the Revolution in Paris for a combined attack upon the State by insurrection and invasion—the mere passing of a law, making the use of seditious language an act of treason, would not have been adequate to the danger. Influential persons would have been justly submitted to question on their allegiance, and insufficient answers would have been interpreted as justifying suspicion. Not the expression only, of opinions subversive of society, but the holding such opinions, however discovered, would have been regarded and treated as a crime, with the full consent of what is called the common sense and educated judgment of the nation.¹

If for "opinions subversive of society," we substitute allegiance to the papacy, the parallel is complete between the year 1848, as it would then have been, and the time when the penal laws which are considered the reproach of the Tudor governments were passed against the Roman Catholics. I assume that the Reformation was in itself right; that the claims of the pope to an English supremacy were unjust; and that it was good and wise to resist those claims. If this be allowed, those laws will not be found to deserve the reproach of tyranny. We shall see in them but the natural resource of a vigorous government placed in circumstances of extreme peril. The Romanism of the present day is a harmless opinion, no more productive of evil than any other superstition, and without tendency, or shadow of tendency, to impair the allegiance of those who profess it. But we must not confound a phantom with a

¹ History is never weary of repeating its warnings against narrow judgments. A year ago we believed that the age of arbitrary severity was past. In the interval we have seen the rebellion in India; the forms of law have been suspended, and Hindoo rajahs have been executed for no greater crime than the possession of letters from the insurgents. The evidence of a treasonable animus has been sufficient to ensure condemnation; and in the presence of necessity the principles of the sixteenth century have been instantly revived.—April, 1858.

substance; or gather from modern experience the temper of a time when words implied realities, when Catholics really believed that they owed no allegiance to an heretical sovereign, and that the first duty of their lives was to a foreign potentate. This perilous doctrine was waning, indeed, but it was not dead. By many it was actively professed; and among those by whom it was denied there were few except the Protestants whom it did not in some degree embarrass and perplex.

The government, therefore, in the close of 1534, having clear evidence before them of intended treason, determined to put it down with a high hand; and with this purpose parliament met again on the 3rd of November. The first act of the session was to give the sanction of the legislature to the title which had been conceded by convocation, and to declare the king supreme Head of the Church of England. As affirmed by the legislature, this designation meant something more than when it was granted three years previously by the clergy. It then implied that the spiritual body were no longer to be an *imperium in imperio* within the realm, but should hold their powers subordinate to the crown. It was now an assertion of independence of foreign jurisdiction; it was the complement of the Act of Appeals, rounding off into completeness the constitution in Church and State of the English nation. The act is short, and being of so great importance, I insert it entire.

"Albeit," it runs, "the King's Majesty justly and rightfully is and ought to be the supreme Head of the Church of England, and so is recognised by the clergy of this realm in their convocation, yet nevertheless, for corroboration and confirmation thereof, and for increase of virtue in Christ's religion within this realm of England, and to repress and extirp all errors, heresies, and other enormities and abuses heretofore used in the same: Be it enacted, by authority of this present parliament, that the King our Sovereign Lord, his heirs and successors, kings of this realm, shall be taken, accepted, and reputed the only supreme Head in earth of the Church of England, called *Anglicana Ecclesia*, and shall have and enjoy, annexed and united to the imperial crown of this realm, as well the title and style thereof as all the honours, dignities, pre-eminences, jurisdictions, authorities, immunities, profits, and commodities, to the said dignity belonging and appertaining; and that our said Sovereign Lord, his heirs and successors, kings of this realm, shall have full power and authority to visit, repress, redress, reform, order, correct, restrain, and amend all such errors

heresies, abuses, contempts, and enormities, whatsoever they be, which by any manner of spiritual authority or jurisdiction ought or may lawfully be reformed—most to the pleasure of Almighty God, the increase of virtue in Christ's religion, and for the conservation of the peace, unity, and tranquillity of this realm—any usage, custom, foreign lawes, foreign authority, prescription, or any other thing or things to the contrary hereof notwithstanding.”¹

Considerable sarcasm has been levelled at the assumption by Henry of this title; and on the accession of Elizabeth, the crown, while reclaiming the authority, thought it prudent to retire from the designation. Yet it answered a purpose in marking the nature of the revolution, and the emphasis of the name carried home the change into the mind of the country. It was the epitome of all the measures which had been passed against the encroachments of the spiritual powers within and without the realm; it was at once the symbol of the independence of England, and the declaration that henceforth the civil magistrate was supreme within the English dominions over church as well as state.²

¹ Act of Supremacy, 26 Hen. VIII. cap. i.

² To guard against misconception, an explanatory document was drawn up by the government at the time of the passing of the act, which is highly curious and significant. “The King's Grace,” says this paper, “hath no new authority given hereby that he is recognised as supreme Head of the Church of England; for in that recognition is included only that he have such power as to a king of right appertaineth by the law of God; and not that he should take any spiritual power from spiritual ministers that is given to them by the Gospel. So that these words, that the king is supreme Head of the Church, serve rather to declare and make open to the world, that the king hath power to suppress all such extorted powers, as well of the Bishop of Rome as of any other within this realm, whereby his subjects might be grieved; and to correct and remove all things whereby any unquietness might arise amongst the people; rather than to prove that he should pretend thereby to take any powers from the successors of the apostles that was given to them by God. And forasmuch as, in the session of this former parliament holden in the twenty-fifth year of this reign, whereby great exactions done to the king's subjects by a power from Rome was put away, and thereupon the promise was made that nothing should be interpreted and expounded upon that statute, that the King's Grace, his nobles or subjects, intended to decline or vary from the congregation of Christ's church in anything concerning the articles of the Catholic faith, or anything declared by Holy Scripture and the Word of God necessary for his Grace's salvation and his subjects'; it is not, therefore, meet lightly to think that the self-same persons, continuing the self-same parliament, would in the next year following make an act whereby the king, his nobles and subjects, should so vary. And no man may with conscience judge that they did so, except they can prove that the words of the statute, whereby the king is recognised to be the supreme Head of the Church of England, should show expressly that they intended to do so; as it is apparent that they do not.

“There is none authority of Scripture that will prove that any one of the

Whether the king was or was not head of the church, became now therefore the rallying point of the struggle; and the denial or acceptance of his title the test of allegiance or disloyalty. To accept it was to go along with the movement heartily and completely; to deny it was to admit the rival sovereignty of the pope, and with his sovereignty the lawfulness of the sentence of excommunication. It was to imply that Henry was not only not head of the church, but that he was no longer lawful King of England, and that the allegiance of the country must be transferred to the Princess Mary when the pope and the emperor should give the word. There might be no intention of treason; the motive of the opposition might be purely religious; but from the nature of the case opposition of any kind would abet the treason of others; and no honesty of meaning could render possible any longer a double loyalty to the crown and to the papacy.

The act conferring the title was in consequence followed by another, declaring the denial of it to be treason. It was necessary to stop the tongues of the noisy mutinous monks, to show them once for all that these high matters were no subjects for trifling. The oath to the succession of the Princess Elizabeth partially answered this purpose; and the obligation to take that oath had been extended to all classes of the king's subjects;¹ but to refuse to swear to the succession was misprision of treason only, not high treason; and the ecclesiastics (it had been seen) found no difficulty in swearing oaths which they did not mean to observe. The parliament therefore now attached to the statute of supremacy the following imperious corollary:—

“Forasmuch as it is most necessary, both for common policy and duty of subjects, above all things to prohibit, provide, restrain, and extinct all manner of shameful slanders, perils, or imminent danger or dangers, which might grow, happen, or apostles should be head of the universal Church of Christendom. And if any of the doctors of the church or the clergy have, by any of their laws or decrees, declared any Scripture to be of that effect, kings and princes, taking to them their counsellors, and such of their clergy as they shall think most indifferent, ought to be judges whether those declarations and laws be made according to the truth of Scripture or not; because it is said in the Psalms, ‘Et nunc Reges intelligite, erudimini qui judicatis terram:’ that is, ‘O kings! understand ye, be ye learned that judge the world.’ And certain it is that the Scripture is always true; and there is nothing that the doctors and clergy might, through dread and affection, [so well] be deceived in, as in things concerning the honour, dignity, power, liberty, jurisdiction, and riches of the bishops and clergy; and some of them have of likelihood been deceived therein.”—Heads of Arguments concerning the Power of the Pope and the Royal Supremacy: *Rolls House MS.*

¹ 26 Hen. VIII. cap. 2.

arise to their sovereign lord the king, the queen, or their heirs, which, when they be heard, seen, or understood, cannot be but odible and also abhorred of all those sorts that be true and loving subjects, if in any point they may, do, or shall touch the king, the queen, their heirs or successors, upon which dependeth the whole unity and universal weal of this realm; without providing wherefore, too great a scope should be given to all cankered and traitorous hearts, willers and workers of the same; and also the king's loving subjects should not declare unto their sovereign lord now being, which unto them both hath been and is most entirely beloved and esteemed, their undoubted sincerity and truth: Be it therefore enacted, that if any person or persons, after the first day of February next coming, do maliciously wish, will, or desire, by words or writing, or by craft imagine, invent, practise, or attempt any bodily harm to be done or committed to the king's most royal person, the queen's, or their heirs apparent, or to *deprive them or any of them of the dignity, title, or name of their royal estates*, or slanderously and maliciously publish and pronounce by express writing or words that the king our sovereign lord should be heretic, schismatic, tyrant, infidel, or usurper of the crown, etc., etc., that all such persons, their aiders, counsellors, concertors, or abettors, being thereof lawfully convict according to the laws and customs of the realm, shall be adjudged traitors, and that every such offence in any of the premises shall be adjudged high treason."¹

The terrible powers which were thus committed to the government lie on the surface of this language; but comprehensive as the statute appears, it was still further extended by the interpretation of the lawyers. In order to fall under its penalties it was held not to be necessary that positive guilt should be proved in any one of the specified offences; it was enough if a man refused to give satisfactory answers when subjected to official examination.² At the discretion of the king or his ministers the active consent to the supremacy might be required of any person on whom they pleased to call, under penalty to the recusant of the dreadful death of a traitor. So extreme a measure can only be regarded as a remedy for an evil which was also extreme; and as on the return of quiet times the parliament made haste to repeal a law which was no longer required,

¹ 26 Hen. VIII. cap. 13.

² More warned Fisher of this. He "did send Mr. Fisher word by a letter that Mr. Solicitor had showed him, that it was all one not to answer, and to say against the statute what a man would, as all the learned men in England would justify."—*State Papers*, vol. i. p. 434.

so in the enactment of that law we are bound to believe that they were not betraying English liberties in a spirit of careless complacency; but that they believed truly that the security of the state required unusual precautions. The nation was standing with its sword half drawn in the face of an armed Europe, and it was no time to permit dissensions in the camp.¹ Toleration is good—but even the best things must abide their opportunity; and although we may regret that in this grand struggle for freedom, success could only be won by the aid of measures which bordered upon oppression, yet here also the even hand of justice was but commending the chalice to the lips of those who had made others drink it to the dregs. They only were likely to fall under the Treason Act who for centuries had fed the rack and the stake with sufferers for “opinion.”

Having thus made provision for public safety, the parliament voted a supply of money for the fortifications on the coast and for the expenses of the Irish war; and after transferring to the crown the first fruits of church benefices, which had been previously paid to the see of Rome, and passing at the same time a large and liberal measure for the appointment of twenty-six suffragan bishops,² they separated, not to meet again for more than a year.

Meanwhile, at Rome a change had taken place which for the moment seemed to promise that the storm after all might pass away. The conclave had elected as a successor to Clement a man who, of all the Italian ecclesiastics, was the most likely to recompose the quarrels in the church; and who, if the genius or the destiny of the papacy had not been too strong for any

¹ The act was repealed in 1547, 1 Edw. VI. cap. 12. The explanation which is there given of the causes which led to the enactment of it is temperate and reasonable. Subjects, says that statute, should obey rather for love of their prince than for fear of his laws: “yet such times at some time cometh in the commonwealth, that it is necessary and expedient for the repressing of the insolence and unruliness of men, and for the foreseeing and providing of remedies against rebellions, insurrections, or such mischiefs as God, sometime with us displeased, doth inflict and lay upon us, or the devil, at God's permission, to assay the good and God's elect, doth sow and set among us,—the which Almighty God and man's policy hath always been content to have stayed—that sharper laws as a harder bridle should be made.”

² 26 Henry VIII. cap. 14: “An Act for Nomination and Consecration of Suffragans within the Realm.” I have already stated my impression that the method of nomination to bishopricks by the crown, as fixed by the 26th of Henry VIII., was not intended to be perpetual. A further evidence of what I said will be found in the arrangements under the present act for the appointment of suffragans. The king made no attempt to retain the patronage. The bishop of each diocese was to nominate two persons, and between these the crown was bound to choose.

individual will, would perhaps have succeeded in restoring peace to Christendom. In the debates upon the divorce the Cardinal Farnese had been steadily upon Henry's side. He had maintained from the first the general justice of the king's demands. After the final sentence was passed, he had urged, though vainly, the reconsideration of that fatal step; and though slow and cautious, although he was a person who, as Sir Gregory Cassalis described him, "would accomplish little, but would make few mistakes,"¹ he had allowed his opinion upon this, as on other matters connected with the English quarrel, to be generally known. He was elected therefore by French influence² as the person most likely to meet the difficulties of Europe in a catholic and conciliating spirit. He had announced his intention, immediately on Clement's death, of calling a general council at the earliest moment, in the event of his being chosen to fill the papal chair; and as he was the friend rather of Francis I. than of the emperor, and as Francis was actively supporting Henry, and was negotiating at the same moment with the Protestant princes in Germany, it seemed as if a council summoned under such auspices would endeavour to compose the general discords in a temper of wise liberality, and that some terms of compromise would be discovered where by mutual concessions Catholic and Protestant might meet upon a common ground.

The moment was propitious for such a hope; for the accession of a moderate pope coincided with the reaction in Germany which followed the scandals at Munster and the excesses of John of Leyden; and Francis pictured to himself a coalition between France, England, and the Lutherans, which, if the papacy was attached to their side, would be strong enough to bear down opposition, and reconstitute the churches of Europe upon the basis of liberality which he seemed to have secured for the church of France. The flattering vision in the autumn of the following year dazzled the German princes. Perhaps in the novelty of hope it was encouraged even by the pope, before he had felt the strong hand of fate which ruled his will.

To Charles V. the danger of some such termination of the great question at issue appeared most near and real. Charles, whose resentment at the conduct of England united with a desire to assert his authority over his subjects in Germany, beheld with the utmost alarm a scheme growing to maturity which menaced alike his honour, his desire of revenge, his

¹ *Parum erraturus sed pauca factur.*—*State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 581.

² *Ibid.* p. 573.

supremacy in Europe, and perhaps his religious convictions. A liberal coalition would be fatal to order, to policy, to truth; and on the election of Cardinal Farnese, the Count de Nassau was sent on a secret mission to Paris with overtures, the elaborate condescension of which betrays the anxiety that must have dictated them. The emperor, in his self-constituted capacity of the Princess Mary's guardian, offered her hand with the English succession to the Duke of Angoulesme. From the terms on which he was thought to stand with Anne Boleyn, it was thought possible that Henry might consent; ¹ he might not dare, as d'Inteville before suggested, to oppose the united demands of France and the Empire.² To Margaret de Valois the Count was to propose the splendid temptation of a marriage with Philip.³ If Francis would surrender the English alliance, the emperor would make over to him the passionately coveted Duchy of Milan,⁴ to be annexed to France on the death of the

¹ Nota qu'il ne sera pas paraventure si fort malayse à gagner ce roy.—
Note on the margin of the Comte de Nassau's Instructions.

² *Charles V. to his Ambassador at Paris.*

" November, 1534.

" . . . In addition, the Count de Nassau and yourself may go further in sounding the King about the Count's proposal—I mean for the marriage of our cousin the Princess of England with the Duke of d'Angoulesme. The Grand Master, I understand, when the Count spoke of it, seemed to enter into the suggestion, and mentioned the displeasure which the King of England had conceived against Anne Boleyn. I am therefore sincerely desirous that the proposal should be well considered, and you will bring it forward as you shall see opportunity. You will make the King and the Grand Master feel the importance of the connection, the greatness which it would confer on the Duke d'Angoulesme, the release of the English debt, which can be easily arranged, and the assurance of the realm of France.

" Such a marriage will be, beyond comparison, more advantageous to the King, his realm, and his children, than any benefit for which he could hope from Milan; while it can be brought about with no considerable difficulty. But be careful what you say, and how you say it. Speak alone to the King and alone to the Grand Master, letting neither of them know that you have spoken to the other. Observe carefully how the King is inclined, and, at all events, be secret; so that if he does not like the thing, the world need not know that it has been thought of.

" Should it be suggested to you—as it may be—that Anne Boleyn may be driven desperate, and may contrive something against the Princess's life, we answer that we can hardly believe her so utterly abandoned by conscience: or, again, the Duke of Anjou may possibly object to the exaltation of his brother; in which case we shall consent willingly to have our cousin marry the Duke of Anjou; and, in that case, beyond the right which appertains to the Duke and Princess from their fathers and mothers, they and either of them shall have the kingdom of Denmark, and we will exert ourselves to compose any difficulties with our Holy Father the Pope."—
MS. Archives at Brussels.

³ *State Papers*, vol. vii. pp. 584-5.

⁴ *Ibid.*

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reigning Duke. In the meantime he would pay to the French king, as "tribute for Milan," a hundred thousand crowns a year, as an acknowledgment of the right of the house of Valois. Offers such as these might well have tempted the light ambition of Francis. If sincere, they were equivalent to a surrender of the prize for which the emperor's life had been spent in contending, and perilous indeed it would have been for England if this intrigue had been permitted to succeed. But whether it was that Francis too deeply distrusted Charles, that he preferred the more hazardous scheme of the German alliance, or that he supposed he could gain his object more surely with the help of England, the Count de Nassau left Paris with a decisive rejection of the emperor's advances; and in the beginning of January, De Bryon, the High Admiral of France, was sent to England, to inform Henry of what had passed, and to propose for Elizabeth the marriage which Charles had desired for the Princess Mary.

De Bryon's instructions were remarkable. To consolidate the alliance of the two nations, he was to entreat Henry at length to surrender the claim to the crown of France, which had been the cause of so many centuries of war. In return for this concession, Francis would make over to England, Gravelines, Newport, Dunkirk, a province of Flanders, and "the title of the Duke of Lorraine to the town of Antwerp, with sufficient assistance for the recovery of the same." Henry was not to press Francis to part from the papacy; and De Bryon seems to have indicated a hope that the English king might retrace his own steps. The weight of French influence, meanwhile, was to be pressed, to induce the pope to revoke and denounce, voyd and frustrate the unjust and slanderous sentence¹ given by his predecessor; and the terms of this new league were to be completed by the betrothal of the Princess Elizabeth to the Duke of Angoulesme.²

There had been a time when these proposals would have answered all which Henry desired. In the early days of his reign he had indulged himself in visions of empire, and of repeating the old glories of the Plantagenet kings. But in the peace which was concluded after the defeat of Pavia, he showed that he had resigned himself to a wiser policy,³ and the surrender of a barren designation would cost him little. In his quarrel with

¹ This is Cromwell's paraphrase. Francis is not responsible for the language.

² *State Papers*, vol. vii. pp. 584-590.

³ See the long and curious correspondence between the English and Spanish courts in the *State Papers*, vol. vi.

the pope, also, he had professed an extreme reluctance to impair the unity of the church; and the sacrifices which he had made, and the years of persevering struggle which he had endured, had proved that in those professions he had not been insincere. But Henry's character was not what it had been when he won his title of Defender of the Faith. In the experience of the last few years he had learnt to conceive some broader sense of the meaning of the Reformation; and he had gathered from Cromwell and Latimer a more noble conception of the Protestant doctrines. He had entered upon an active course of legislation for the putting away the injustices, the falsehoods, the oppressions of a degenerate establishment; and in the strong sense that he had done right, and nothing else but right, in these measures, he was not now disposed to submit to a compromise, or to consent to undo anything which he was satisfied had been justly done, in consideration of any supposed benefit which he could receive from the pope. He was anxious to remain in communion with the see of Rome. He was willing to acknowledge in some innocuous form the Roman supremacy. But it could be only on his own terms. The pope must come to him; he could not go to the pope. And the papal precedence should only again be admitted in England on conditions which should leave untouched the Act of Appeals, and should preserve the sovereignty of the crown unimpaired.

He replied, therefore, to the overtures of Francis, that he was ready to enter into negotiations for the resignation of his title to the crown of France, and for the proposed marriage.¹ Before any other step was taken, however, he desired his good brother to insist that "the Bishop of Rome" should revoke the sentence, and "declare his pretended marriage with the Lady Catherine naught;" "which to do," Henry wrote (and this portion of his reply is written by his own hand), "we think it very facile for our good brother; since we do perceive by letters [from Rome] both the opinions of the learned men there to be of that opinion that we be of; and also a somewhat disposition to that purpose in the Bishop of Rome's self, according to equity, reason, and the laws both positive and divine." If there was to be a reconciliation with the Holy See, the first advance must be made on the Bishop of Rome's side; and Cromwell, in a simultaneous despatch, warned Francis not "to move or desire his Grace to the violation of any laws recently passed, as a thing whereunto he would in no wise condescend or agree."²

¹ *State Papers*, vol. vii. pp. 587-8.

² *Ibid.* p. 587.

Henry, however, felt no confidence either in the sincerity of the pope, or in the sincerity of the French king, as he haughtily showed. He did not even trust De Bryon's account of the rejection of the overtures of the emperor. "If it happeneth," he wrote, "that the said Bishop will obstinately follow the steps of his predecessor, and be more inclined to the maintenance of the actions and sentences of his see than to equity and justice, then we trust that our good brother—perceiving the right to stand on our side, and that not only the universities of his whole realm and dominions hath so defined, but also the most part of the rest of Christendom, and also the best learned men of the Bishop of Rome's own council, now being called for that purpose—will fully and wholly, both he and his whole realm, adhere and cleave to us and our doings in this behalf; and we herein desire shortly to have answer, which we would be right loth should be such as whereupon we might take any occasion of suspicion; trusting, further, that our said good brother will both promise unto us upon his word, and indeed perform, that in the meantime, before the meeting of our deputies,¹ he nor directly nor indirectly shall practise or set forth any means or intelligence of marriage, or of other practices with the emperor."²

So cold an answer could have arisen only from deep distrust; it is difficult to say whether the distrust was wholly deserved. Analogous advances made indirectly from the pope were met with the same reserve. Sir Gregory Cassalis wrote to Cromwell, that Farnese, or Paul III., as he was now called, had expressed the greatest desire to please the king. He had sent for lawyers out of Tuscany, on whose judgment he had great reliance, and these lawyers had given an opinion that the pope might *ex officio* annul the first marriage as Henry desired, and pronounce the second valid.³ This was well, but it did not go beyond words; and of these there had been too many. The English government had fed upon "theameleon's dish," "eating the air promise crammed," till they were weary of so weak a diet, and they desired something more substantial. If the pope, replied Cromwell, be really well disposed, let him show his disposition in some public manner, "of his own accord, with a desire only for the truth, and without waiting till the King's Majesty entreat him."⁴ It would have been more courteous, and per-

¹ Who were to arrange the betrothal of Elizabeth to the Duke of Angoulême.

² Henry VIII. to De Bryon: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 389.

³ *Ibid.* p. 391.

⁴ "Sua sponte solius veritatis propagandæ studio; nullâ regis Majestatis

haps it would have been more just, if the French overtures had been met in a warmer spirit; for the policy of Francis required for the time a cordial understanding with England; and his conduct seems to prove that he was sincerely anxious to win the pope to complacency.¹ But Henry's experience guided him wisely with the Roman Bishop; and if he had been entangled into confidence in Farnese, he would have been entangled to his ruin.

The spring of 1535 was consumed in promises, negotiations, and a repetition of the profitless story of the preceding years. Suddenly, in the midst of the unreality, it became clear that one man at least was serious. Henry, with an insurgent Ireland and a mutinous England upon his hands, had no leisure for diplomatic finesse; he had learnt his lesson with Clement, and was not to be again deceived. The language of the Roman see had been inconsistent, but the actions of it had been always uniform. From the first beginning of the dispute to the final break and excommunication, in the teeth of his promises, his flatteries, his acknowledgments, Clement had been the partisan of Catherine. When the English agents were collecting the opinions of the Italian universities, they were thwarted by his emissaries. He had intrigued against Henry in Scotland; he had tampered with Henry's English and Irish subjects; he had maintained a secret correspondence with Catherine herself. And so well had his true feelings and the true position of the question been understood by the papal party in England, that at the very time when at Marseilles and elsewhere the pope himself was admitting the justice of the king's demand, the religious orders who were most unwavering in their allegiance to the papacy, were pressing their opposition to the divorce into rebellion.

When, therefore, the Chair of St. Peter was filled by a new occupant, and language of the same smooth kind began again to issue from it, the English government could not for so light a cause consent to arrest their measures, or suspend the action of laws which had been passed from a conviction of their necessity. Whatever might become of French marriages, or of the cession of a corner of the Netherlands and a few towns upon the coast in exchange for a gaudy title, the English Reformation must continue its way; the nation must be steered clear among the reefs and shoals of treason. The late statutes had not been *intercessione expectata*."—Cromwell to Cassalis: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 592.

¹ Language can scarcely be stronger than that which he directed his ambassador at Rome to use—short, at least, of absolute menace.—*State Papers*, vol. vii. pp. 593-4.

passed without a cause; and when occasion came to enforce them, were not to pass off, like the thunders of the Vatican, in impotent noise.

Here, therefore, we are to enter upon one of the grand scenes of history; a solemn battle fought out to the death, yet fought without ferocity, by the champions of rival principles. Heroic men had fallen, and were still fast falling, for what was called heresy; and now those who had inflicted death on others were called upon to bear the same witness to their own sincerity. England became the theatre of a war between two armies of martyrs, to be waged, not upon the open field, in open action, but on the stake and on the scaffold, with the nobler weapons of passive endurance. Each party were ready to give their blood; each party were ready to shed the blood of their antagonists; and the sword was to single out its victims in the rival ranks, not as in peace among those whose crimes made them dangerous to society, but, as on the field of battle, where the most conspicuous courage most challenges the aim of the enemy. It was war, though under the form of peace; and if we would understand the true spirit of the time, we must regard Catholics and Protestants as gallant soldiers, whose deaths, when they fall, are not painful, but glorious; and whose devotion we are equally able to admire, even where we cannot equally approve their cause. Courage and self-sacrifice are beautiful alike in an enemy and in a friend. And while we exult in that chivalry with which the Smithfield martyrs bought England's freedom with their blood, so we will not refuse our admiration to those other gallant men whose high forms, in the sunset of the old faith, stand transfigured on the horizon, tinged with the light of its dying glory.

Secretary Bedyll, as we saw above, complained to Cromwell of the obstinacy of certain friars and monks, who, he thought, would confer a service on the country by dying quietly, lest honest men should incur unmerited obloquy in putting them to death. Among these, the brethren of the London Charterhouse were specially mentioned as recalcitrant, and they were said at the same time to bear a high reputation for holiness. In a narrative written by a member of this body, we are brought face to face, at their time of trial, with one of the few religious establishments in England which continued to deserve the name; and we may see, in the scenes which are there described, the highest representation of struggles which graduated variously according to character and temper, and, without the tragical

result, may have been witnessed in very many of the monastic houses. The writer was a certain Maurice Channey, probably an Irishman. He went through the same sufferings with the rest of the brethren, and was one of the small fraction who finally gave way under the trial. He was set at liberty, and escaped abroad; and in penance for his weakness, he left on record the touching story of his fall, and of the triumph of his bolder companions.

He commences with his own confession. He had fallen when others stood. He was, as he says, an unworthy brother, a Saul among the prophets, a Judas among the apostles, a child of Ephraim turning himself back in the day of battle—for which his cowardice, while his brother monks were saints in heaven, he was doing penance in sorrow, tossing on the waves of the wide world. The early chapters contain a loving lingering picture of his cloister life—to him the perfection of earthly happiness. It is placed before us, in all its superstition, its devotion, and its simplicity, the counterpart, even in minute details, of the stories of the Saxon recluses when monasticism was in the young vigour of its life. St. Bede or St. Cuthbert might have found himself in the house of the London Carthusians, and he would have had few questions to ask, and no duties to learn or to unlearn. The form of the buildings would have seemed more elaborate; the notes of the organ would have added richer solemnity to the services; but the salient features of the scene would have been all familiar. He would have lived in a cell of the same shape, he would have thought the same thoughts, spoken the same words in the same language. The prayers, the daily life, almost the very faces with which he was surrounded, would have seemed all unaltered. A thousand years of the world's history had rolled by, and these lonely islands of prayer had remained still anchored in the stream; the strands of the ropes which held them, wearing now to a thread, and very near their last parting, but still unbroken. What they had been they were; and, if Maurice Channey's description had come down to us as the account of the monastery in which Offa of Mercia did penance for his crimes, we could have detected no internal symptoms of a later age.

His pages were filled with the old familiar stories of visions and miracles; of strange adventures befalling the chalices and holy wafers;¹ of angels with wax candles; innocent phantoms which flitted round brains and minds fevered by asceticism.

¹ *Histeria Martyrum Anglorum*, cap. a.

There are accounts of certain *fratres reprobi et eorum terribilis punitio*—frail brethren and the frightful catastrophes which ensued to them.¹ Brother Thomas, who told stories out of doors, *apud sæculares*, was attacked one night by the devil; and the fiend would have strangled him but for the prayers of a companion. Brother George, who craved after the fleshpots of Egypt, was walking one day about the cloister when he ought to have been at chapel, and the great figure upon the cross at the end of the gallery turned its back upon him as it hung, and drove him all but mad. Brother John Daly found fault with his dinner, and said that he would as soon eat toads—*Mira res! Justus Deus non fraudavit eum desiderio suo*—his cell was for three months filled with toads. If he threw them into the fire, they hopped back to him unscorched; if he killed them, others came to take their place.

But these bad brothers were rare exceptions. In general the house was perhaps the best ordered in England. The hospitality was well sustained, the charities were profuse, and whatever we may think of the intellect which could busy itself with fancies seemingly so childish, the monks were true to their vows, and true to their duty as far as they comprehended what duty meant. Among many good, the prior John Haughton was the best. He was of an old English family, and had been educated at Cambridge, where he must have been the contemporary of Latimer. At the age of twenty-eight he took the vows as a monk, and had been twenty years a Carthusian at the opening of the troubles of the Reformation. He is described as "small in stature, in figure graceful, in countenance dignified." "In manner he was most modest; in eloquence most sweet; in chastity without stain." We may readily imagine his appearance; with that feminine austerity of expression which, as has been well said, belongs so peculiarly to the features of the mediæval ecclesiastics.

Such was the society of the monks of the Charterhouse, who, in an era too late for their continuance, and guilty of being unable to read the signs of the times, were summoned to wage unequal battle with the world. From the commencement of the divorce cause they had espoused instinctively the queen's side; they had probably, in common with their affiliated house at Sion, believed unwisely in the Nun of Kent; and, as pious Catholics, they regarded the reforming measures of the parliament with dismay and consternation. The year 1533, says

¹ *Historia Martyrum Anglorum*, cap. 8.

Maurice,¹ was ushered in with signs in heaven and prodigies upon earth, as if the end of the world was at hand; as indeed of the monks and the monks' world the end was truly at hand. And then came the spring of 1534, when the act was passed cutting off the Princess Mary from the succession, and requiring of all subjects of the realm an oath of allegiance to Elizabeth, and a recognition of the king's marriage with Queen Anne. Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher went to the Tower, as we saw, rather than swear; and about the same time the royal commissioners appeared at the Charterhouse to require the submission of the brethren. The regular clergy through the kingdom had bent to the storm. The conscience of the London Carthusians was less elastic; they were the first and, with the exception of More and Fisher, the only recusants. "The prior did answer to the commissioners," Maurice tells us, "that he knew nothing of such matters, and could not meddle with them; and they continuing to insist, and the prior being still unable to give other answer, he was sent with Father Humphrey, our proctor, to the Tower." There he remained for a month; and at the end of it he was persuaded by "certain good and learned men"² that the cause was not one for which it was lawful to suffer. He undertook to comply, *sub conditione*, with some necessary reservations, and was sent home to the cloister. As soon as he returned the brethren assembled in their chapter-house "in confusion and great perplexity," and Haughton told them what he had promised. He would submit, he said, and yet his misgivings foretold to him that a submission so made could not long avail. "Our hour, dear brethren," he continued, "is not yet come. In the same night in which we were set free I had a dream that I should not escape thus. Within a year I shall be brought again to that place, and then I shall finish my course." If martyrdom was so near and so inevitable, the remainder of the monks were at first reluctant to purchase a useless delay at the price of their convictions. The commissioners came with the lord mayor for the oath, and it was refused. They came again, with the threat of instant imprisonment for the whole fraternity; "and then," says Maurice, "they prevailed with us. We all swore as we were required, making one condition, that we submitted only so far as it was lawful for us so to do. Thus, like Jonah, we were delivered from the belly of this monster, this

¹ *Historia Martyrum*, cap. 9.

² Stokesley, Bishop of London, among others: *State Papers*, vol. i. pp. 423-4.

immanis ceta, and began again to rejoice like him, under the shadow of the gourd of our home. But it is better to trust in the Lord than in princes, in whom is no salvation; God had prepared a worm that smote our gourd and made it to perish."¹

This worm, as may be supposed, was the act of supremacy, with the statute of treasons which was attached to it. It was ruled, as I have said, that inadequate answers to official inquiry formed sufficient ground for prosecution under these acts. But this interpretation was not generally known; nor among those who knew it was it certain whether the crown would avail itself of the powers which it thus possessed, or whether it would proceed only against such offenders as had voluntarily committed themselves to opposition. In the opening of the following year [1535] the first uncertainty was at an end; it was publicly understood that persons who had previously given cause for suspicion might be submitted to question. When this bitter news was no longer doubtful, the prior called the convent together, and gave them notice to prepare for what was coming. They lay already under the shadow of treason; and he anticipated, among other evil consequences of disobedience, the immediate dissolution of the house. Even he, with all his forebodings, was unprepared for the course which would really be taken with them. "When we were all in great consternation," writes our author, "he said to us:—

" 'Very sorry am I, and my heart is heavy, especially for you, my younger friends, of whom I see so many round me. Here you are living in your innocence. The yoke will not be laid on your necks, nor the rod of persecution. But if you are taken hence, and mingle among the Gentiles, you may learn the works of them, and having begun in the spirit you may be consumed in the flesh. And there may be others among us whose hearts are still infirm. If these mix again with the world, I fear how it may be with them; and what shall I say, and what shall I do, if I cannot save those whom God has trusted to my charge? "

"Then all who were present," says Channey, "burst into tears, and cried with one voice, Let us die together in our integrity, and heaven and earth shall witness for us how unjustly we are cut off."

"The prior answered, sadly—"Would, indeed, that it might be so; that so dying we might live, as living we die—but they will not do to us so great a kindness, nor to themselves so great an injury. Many of you are of noble blood; and what I think

¹ *Historia Martyrum*, cap. 9.

they will do is this: Me and the elder brethren they will kill; and they will dismiss you that are young into a world which is not for you. *If, therefore, it depend on me alone—if my oath will suffice for the house—I will throw myself for your sakes on the mercy of God. I will make myself anathema; and to preserve you from these dangers, I will consent to the king's will.* If, however, they have determined otherwise—if they choose to have the consent of us all—the will of God be done. If one death will not avail, we will die all.”

“So then, bidding us prepare for the worst, that the Lord when he knocked might find us ready, he desired us to choose each our confessor, and to confess our sins one to another, giving us power to grant each other absolution.

“The day after he preached a sermon in the chapel on the 59th Psalm,—‘O God, Thou hast cast us off, Thou hast destroyed us;’¹ concluding with the words, ‘It is better that we should suffer here a short penance for our faults, than be reserved for the eternal pains of hell hereafter;’—and so ending, he turned to us and bade us all do as we saw him do. Then rising from his place he went direct to the eldest of the brethren, who was sitting nearest to himself, and kneeling before him, begged his forgiveness for any offence which in heart, word, or deed, he might have committed against him. Thence he proceeded to the next, and said the same; and so to the next, through us all, we following him and saying as he did, each from each imploring pardon.”

Thus, with unobtrusive nobleness, did these poor men prepare themselves for their end; not less beautiful in their resolution, not less deserving the everlasting remembrance of mankind, and those three hundred who in the summer morning sate combing their golden hair in the passes of Thermopylæ. We will not regret their cause; there is no cause for which any man can more nobly suffer than to witness that it is better for him to die than to speak words which he does not mean. Nor, in this their hour of trial, were they left without higher comfort.

“The third day after,” the story goes on, “was the mass of the Holy Ghost, and God made known his presence among us. For when the host was lifted up, there came as it were a whisper of air, which breathed upon our faces as we knelt. Some perceived it with the bodily senses; all felt it as it thrilled into their hearts. And then followed a sweet, soft sound of music, at which our venerable father was so moved, God being thus

¹ The 60th in the English version.

abundantly manifest among us, that he sank down in tears, and for a long time could not continue the service—we all remaining stupefied, hearing the melody, and feeling the marvellous effects of it upon our spirits, but knowing neither whence it came nor whither it went. Only our hearts rejoiced as we perceived that God was with us indeed.”

Comforted and resolute, the brotherhood awaited patiently the approach of the commissioners; and they waited long, for the crown was in no haste to be severe. The statutes had been passed in no spirit of cruelty; they were weapons to be used in case of extremity; and there was no attempt to enforce them until forbearance was misconstrued into fear. Sir Thomas More and the Bishop of Rochester remained unquestioned in the Tower, and were allowed free intercourse with their friends. The Carthusian monks were left undisturbed, although the attitude which they had assumed was notorious, and although the prior was known to forbid his penitents in confession to acknowledge the king's supremacy. If the government was at length driven to severity, it was because the clergy forced them to it in spite of themselves.

The clergy had taken the oath, but they held themselves under no obligation to observe it; or if they observed the orders of the crown in the letter, they thwarted those orders in the spirit. The Treason Act had for awhile overawed them; but finding that its threats were confined to language, that months passed away, and that no person had as yet been prosecuted, they fell back into open opposition, either careless of the consequences, or believing that the government did not dare to exert its powers. The details of their conduct during the spring months of this year I am unable to discover; but it was such as at length, on the 17th of April, provoked the following circular to the lords-lieutenant of the various counties: ¹—

“Right trusty and well-beloved cousin, we greet you well; and whereas it has come to our knowledge that sundry persons, as well religious as secular priests and curates in their parishes and in divers places within this our realm, do daily, as much as in them is, set forth and extol the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome, otherwise called the Pope; sowing their seditious, pestilent, and false doctrines; praying for him in the pulpit and making him a god; to the great deceit of our subjects, bringing them into errors and evil opinions; more preferring the power, laws, and jurisdiction of the said Bishop of Rome than the most

¹ Printed in STRYPE's *Memorials*, vol. i. Appendix, p. 268.

holy laws and precepts of Almighty God: We therefore, minding not only to proceed for an unity and quietness among our said subjects, but also greatly coveting and desiring them to be brought to a knowledge of the mere verity and truth, and no longer to be seduced with any such superstitious and false doctrines of any earthly usurper of God's laws—will, therefore, and command you, that whensoever ye shall hear of any such seditious persons, ye indelayedly do take and apprehend them, or cause them to be apprehended and taken, and so committed to ward, there to remain without bail or mainprize, until, upon your advertisement thereof to us and to our council, ye shall know our further pleasure.

HENRY R."

In obvious connection with the issue of this publication, the monks of the Charterhouse were at length informed that they would be questioned on the supremacy. The great body of the religious houses had volunteered an outward submission. The London Carthusians, with other affiliated establishments, had remained passive, and had thus furnished an open encouragement to disobedience. We are instinctively inclined to censure an interference with persons who at worst were but dreamers of the cloister; and whose innocence of outward offences we imagine might have served them for a shield. Unhappily, behind the screenwork of these poor saints a whole Irish insurrection was blazing in madness and fury; and in the northern English counties were some sixty thousand persons ready to rise in arms. In these great struggles men are formidable in proportion to their virtues. The noblest Protestants were chosen by the Catholics for the stake. The fagots were already growing which were to burn Tyndal, the translator of the Bible. It was the habit of the time, as it is the habit of all times of real danger, to spare the multitude but to strike the leaders, to make responsibility the shadow of power, to choose for punishment the most efficacious representatives of the spirit which it was necessary to subdue.

The influence of the Carthusians, with that of the two great men who were following the same road to the same goal, determined multitudes in the attitude which they would assume, and in the duty which they would choose. The Carthusians, therefore, were to be made to bend; or if they could not be bent, to be made examples in their punishment, as they had made themselves examples in their resistance. They were noble and good; but there were others in England good and noble as they,

who were not of their fold; and whose virtues, thenceforward more required by England than cloistered asceticisms, had been blighted under the shadow of the papacy. The Catholics had chosen the alternative, either to crush the free thought which was bursting from the soil, or else to be crushed by it; and the future of the world could not be sacrificed to preserve the exotic graces of mediæval saints. They fell, gloriously and not unprofitably. They were not allowed to stay the course of the Reformation; but their sufferings, nobly borne, sufficed to recover the sympathy of after ages for the faith which they professed. Ten righteous men were found in the midst of the corruption to purchase for Romanism a few more centuries of tolerated endurance.

To return to the narrative of Maurice Channey. Notice of the intention of the government having been signified to the order, Father Webster and Father Lawrence, the priors of the two daughter houses of Axholm and Belville, came up to London three weeks after Easter, and, with Haughton, presented themselves before Cromwell with an entreaty to be excused the submission. For answer to their petition they were sent to the Tower, where they were soon after joined by Father Reynolds, one of the recalcitrant monks of Sion. These four were brought on the 26th of April before a committee of the privy council, of which Cromwell was one. The act of supremacy was laid before them, and they were required to signify their acceptance of it. They refused, and two days after they were brought to trial before a special commission. They pleaded all "not guilty." They had of course broken the act; but they would not acknowledge that guilt could be involved in disobedience to a law which was itself unlawful. Their words in the Tower to the privy council formed the matter of the charge against them. It appears from the record that on their examination, "they, treacherously machinating and desiring to deprive the king our sovereign lord of his title of supreme Head of the Church of England, did openly declare and say, the king our sovereign lord is not supreme Head on earth of the Church of England."¹

But their conduct on the trial, or at least the conduct of Haughton, spared all difficulty in securing a conviction. The judges pressed the prior "not to shew so little wisdom as to maintain his own opinion against the consent of the realm."

¹ *BLON DE SECRETS*; Appendix II. to the *Third Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records*.

He replied, that he had resolved originally to imitate the example of his Master before Herod, and say nothing. "But since you urge me," he continued, "that I may satisfy my own conscience and the consciences of these who are present, I will say that our opinion, if it might go by the suffrages of men, would have more witnesses than yours. You can produce on your side but the parliament of a single kingdom; I, on mine, have the whole Christian world except that kingdom. Nor have you all even of your own people. The lesser part is with you. The majority, who seem to be with you, do but dissemble, to gain favour with the king, or for fear they should lose their honours and their dignities."

Cromwell asked him of whom he was speaking. "Of all the good men in the realm," he replied; "and when his Majesty knows the truth, I know well he will be beyond measure offended with those of his bishops who have given him the counsel which he now follows."

"Why," said another of the judges, "have you, contrary to the king's authority within the realm, persuaded so many persons as you have done to disobey the king and parliament?"

"I have declared my opinion," he answered, "to no man living but to those who came to me in confession, which in discharge of my conscience I could not refuse. But if I did not declare it then, I will declare it now, because I am thereto obliged to God."¹ He neither looked for mercy nor desired it. A writ was issued for the return of a petty jury the following day. The prisoners were taken back to the Tower, and the next morning were brought again to the bar. Feron and Hale, the two priests whose conversation had been overheard at Sion, were placed on their trial at the same time. The two latter threw themselves on the mercy of the court. A verdict of guilty was returned against the other four. The sentence was for the usual punishment of high treason. Feron was pardoned; I do not find on what account. Hale and the Carthusians were to suffer together. When Haughton heard the sentence, he merely said, "This is the judgment of the world."²

¹ STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. i. p. 305; *Historia Martyrum Anglorum*.

² Father Maurice says that the jury desired to acquit; and after debating for a night, were preparing a verdict of Not Guilty; when Cromwell, hearing of their intention, went in person to the room where they were assembled, and threatened them with death unless they did what he called their duty. The story is internally improbable. The conditions of the case did not admit of an acquittal; and the conduct attributed to Cromwell is incon-

An interval of five days were allowed after the trial. On the 4th of May, the execution took place at Tyburn, under circumstances which marked the occasion with peculiar meaning. The punishment in cases of high treason was very terrible. I need not dwell upon the form of it. The English were a hard, fierce people; and with these poor sufferers the law of the land took its course without alleviation or interference. But another feature distinguished the present execution. For the first time in English history, ecclesiastics were brought out to suffer in their habits, without undergoing the previous ceremony of degradation. Thenceforward the world were to know, that as no sanctuary any more should protect traitors, so the sacred office should avail as little; and the hardest blow which it had yet received was thus dealt to superstition, shaking from its place in the minds of all men the key-stone of the whole system.

To the last moment escape was left open, if the prisoners would submit. Several members of the council attended them to the closing scene, for a last effort of kindness; but they had chosen their course, and were not to be moved from it. Haughton, as first in rank, had the privilege of first dying. When on the scaffold, in compliance with the usual custom, he spoke a few touching and simple words to the people. "I call to witness Almighty God," he said, "and all good people, and I beseech you all here present to bear witness for me in the day of judgment, that being here to die, I declare that it is from no obstinate rebellious spirit that I do not obey the king, but because I fear to offend the Majesty of God. Our holy mother the church has decreed otherwise than the king and the parliament have decreed, and therefore, rather than disobey the church, I am ready to suffer. Pray for me, and have mercy on my brethren, of whom I have been the unworthy prior." He then knelt down, repeating the first few verses of the 31st Psalm,¹ and after a few moments delivered himself to the

sistent with his character. Any doubt which might remain, in the absence of opposing testimony, is removed by the record of the trial, from which it appears clearly that the jury were not returned until the 29th of April, and that the verdict was given in on the same day.—BAGA DE SECRETIS; Appendix to the *Third Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records*.

¹"In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion: deliver me in thy righteousness. Bow down thine ear to me; make haste to deliver me. And be thou my strong rock and house of defence, that thou mayest save me. For thou art my strong rock, and my castle; be thou also my guide, and lead me for thy name's sake. Draw me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength. Into thy hands I commend my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth!"

executioner. The others followed, undaunted. As one by one they went to their death, the council, at each fresh horrible spectacle, urged the survivors to have pity on themselves; but they urged them in vain. The faces of these men did not grow pale; their voices did not shake; they declared themselves liege subjects of the king, and obedient children of holy church; "giving God thanks that they were held worthy to suffer for the truth."¹ All died without a murmur. The stern work was ended with quartering the bodies; and the arm of Haughton was hung up as a bloody sign over the archway of the Charterhouse, to awe the remaining brothers into submission.

But the spirit of the old martyrs was in these friars. One of them, like the Theban sister, bore away the honoured relic and buried it; and all resolved to persist in their resigned opposition. Six weeks were allowed them to consider. At the end of that time three more were taken, tried, and hanged;² and this still proving ineffectual, Cromwell hesitated to proceed.

The end of the story is very touching and may be told briefly, that I may not have occasion to return to it. Maurice's account is probably exaggerated, and is written in a tone of strong emotion; but it has all the substantial features of truth. The remaining monks were left in the house; and two secular priests were sent to take charge of the establishment, who starved and ill-used them; and were themselves, according to Maurice, sensual and profligate. From time to time they were called before the privy council. Their friends and relatives were ordered to work upon them. No effort either of severity or kindness was spared to induce them to submit; as if their attitude, so long as it was maintained, was felt as a reproach by the government. At last, four were carried down to Westminster Abbey, to hear the Bishop of Durham deliver his famous sermon against the pope; and when this rhetorical inanity had also failed, and as they were thought to confirm one another in their obstinacy, they were dispersed among other houses the temper of which could be depended upon. Some were sent to the north; others to Sion, where a new prior had been appointed, of zealous loyalty; others were left at home to be disciplined by the questionable seculars. But nothing answered. Two found their way into active rebellion, and being concerned in the Pilgrimage of Grace, were hung in chains

¹ *Historia Martyrum Anglorum.*

² On the 19th of June. Hall says they were insolent to Cromwell on their trial.

at York. Ten were sent to Newgate, where nine died miserably of prison fever and filth;¹ the tenth survivor was executed. The remainder, of whom Maurice was one, went through a form of submission, with a mental reservation, and escaped abroad.

So fell the monks of the London Charterhouse, splintered to pieces—for so only could their resistance be overcome—by the iron sceptre and the iron hand which held it. They were, however, alone of their kind. There were many perhaps who wished to resemble them, who would have imitated their example had they dared. But all bent except these. If it had been otherwise, the Reformation would have been impossible, and perhaps it would not have been needed. Their story claims from us that sympathy which is the due of their exalted courage. But we cannot blame the government. Those who know what the condition of the country really was, must feel their inability to suggest, with any tolerable reasonableness, what else could have been done. They may regret so hard a necessity, but they will regret in silence. The king, too, was not without feeling. It was no matter of indifference to him that he found himself driven to such stern courses with his subjects; and as the golden splendour of his manhood was thus sullenly clouding, "he commanded all about his court to poll their heads," in public token of mourning; "and to give them example, he caused his own head to be polled; and from thenceforth his beard to be knotted, and to be no more shaven."²

The friars of Charterhouse suffered for the Catholic faith, as Protestants had suffered, and were still to suffer, for a faith fairer than theirs. In this same month of May, in the same year, the English annals contain another entry of no less sad significance. The bishops, as each day they parted further from their old allegiance, and were called in consequence by the hateful name of heretics, were increasingly anxious to prove by evident tokens their zeal for the true faith; and although the

¹ "By the hand of God," according to Mr. Secretary Bedyll. "My very good Lord, after my most hearty commendations, it shall please your lordship to understand that the monks of the Charterhouse here in London which were committed to Newgate for their traitorous behaviour, long time continued against the King's Grace, be almost dispatched by the hand of God, as may appear to you by this bill enclosed; whereof, considering their behaviour and the whole matter, I am not sorry, but would that all such as love not the King's Highness and his worldly honour were in like case."—Bedyll to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 162.

² Stow, p. 571. And see the Diary of Richard Hilles, merchant, of London, MS., Balliol College, Oxford.

late act of heresy had moderated their powers, yet power enough remained to enable them to work their will upon all extreme offenders. Henry, also, it is likely, was not sorry of an opportunity of showing that his justice was even-handed, and that a schism from the papacy was not a lapse into heterodoxy. His mind was moving. Latimer and Shaxton, who three years before had been on trial for their lives, were soon to be upon the bench; and in the late injunctions, the Bible, and not the decrees of the church, had been held up as the canon of truth. But heresy, though the definition of it was changing, remained a crime; and although the limits of permitted belief were imperceptibly enlarging, to transgress the recognised boundaries was an offence enormous as ever.

If we can conceive the temper with which the reasonable and practical English at present regard the Socialists of the continent, deepened by an intensity of conviction, of which these later ages have had but little experience, we can then imagine the light in which the Anabaptists of the Netherlands appeared in the eyes of orthodox Europe. If some opinions, once thought heretical, were regarded with less agitated repugnance, the heresy of these enemies of mankind was patent to the world. On them the laws of the country might take their natural course, and no voice was raised to speak for them.

We find, therefore, in Stow's *Chronicle*, the following brief entry: "The five and twentieth day of May were, in St. Paul's church, London, examined nineteen men and six women, born in Holland, whose opinions were—first, that in Christ is not two natures, God and man; secondly, that Christ took neither flesh nor blood of the Virgin Mary; thirdly, that children born of infidels may be saved; fourthly, that baptism of children is of none effect; fifthly, that the sacrament of Christ's body is but bread only; sixthly, that he who after baptism sinneth wittingly, sinneth deadly, and cannot be saved. Fourteen of them were condemned: a man and a woman were burnt at Smithfield. The remaining twelve were scattered among other towns, there to be burnt."¹ The details are gone²—the names are

¹ Stow's *Chronicle*, p. 571.

² Latimer alludes to the story with no disapproval of the execution of these men—as we should not have disapproved of it, if we had lived then, unless we had been Anabaptists ourselves. A brave death, Latimer says, is no proof of a good cause. "This is no good argument, my friends; this is a deceivable argument: he went to his death boldly—ergo, he standeth in a just quarrel. The Anabaptists that were burnt here in divers towns in England (as I heard of credible men—I saw them not myself), went to their death intrepide, as you will say; without any fear in the world—

gone. Poor Hollanders they were, and that is all. Scarcely the fact seemed worth the mention, so shortly it is told in a passing paragraph. For them no Europe was agitated, no courts were ordered into mourning, no papal hearts trembled with indignation. At their deaths the world looked on complacent, indifferent, or exulting. Yet here, too, out of twenty-five common men and women were found fourteen who, by no terror of stake or torture, could be tempted to say that they believed what they did not believe. History for them has no word of praise; yet they, too, were not giving their blood in vain. Their lives might have been as useless as the lives of most of us. In their deaths they assisted to pay the purchase-money for England's freedom.

After the execution of the Carthusians, it became a question what should be done with the Bishop of Rochester and Sir Thomas More. They had remained for a year in the Tower, undisturbed; and there is no reason to think that they would have been further troubled, except for the fault of one, if not of both. It appeared, however, on the trial of Father Reynolds, that Fisher's imprudence or zeal had tempted him again to meddle with dangerous matters. A correspondence had passed between the bishop and the king,¹ on the Act of Supremacy, or on some subject connected with it. The king had taken no public notice of Fisher's words, but he had required a promise that the letter should not be shown to any other person. The unwise old man gave his word, but he did not observe it; he sent copies both of what he had himself written and of the king's answer to the Sion monks,² furnishing them at the same time with a copy of the book which he had written against the divorce, cheerfully: well, let them go. There was in the old times another kind of poisoned heretics that were called Donatists; and these heretics went to their execution as they should have gone to some jolly recreation or banquet."—LATIMER's *Sermons*, p. 160.

¹ He wrote to the king on the 14th of June, in consequence of an examination at the Tower; but that letter could not have been spoken of on the trial of the Carthusians.—See *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 431.

² "I had the confessor alone in very secret communication concerning certain letters of Mr. Fisher's, of which Father Reynolds made mention in his examination; which the said Fisher promised the King's Grace that he never showed to any other man, neither would. The said confessor hath confessed to me that the said Fisher sent to him, to the said Reynolds, and to one other brother of them, the copy of his said letters directed to the King's Grace, and the copy of the king's answer also. He hath acknowledged to me also that the said Fisher sent unto them with the said copies a book of his, made in defence of the King's Grace's first marriage, and also Abel's book, and one other book made by the emperor's ambassador, as I suppose."—Bedyll to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, pp. 45, 46.

and two other books, written by Abel, the queen's confessor, and the Spanish ambassador. Whether he was discovered to have held any other correspondence, or whether anything of an analogous kind was proved against More, I am unable to discover. Both he and Fisher had been treated with greater indulgence than was usual with prisoners.¹ Their own attendants had waited on them; they were allowed to receive visits from their relatives within the Tower walls, and to correspond with their families and friends.² As a matter of course, under such circumstances, they must have expressed their opinions on the great subject of the day; and those opinions were made known throughout England, and, indeed, throughout Europe. Whether they did more than this, or whether they had only indirectly allowed their influence to be used against the government, must be left to conjecture. But the language of a document under the king's hand speaks of their having given some cause of provocation, of no common kind; and this is confirmed by Cromwell, who was once deeply attached to More. "When they were in strait keeping," say the instructions to the Bishop of Hereford, "having nevertheless the prison at their liberties, they ceased not both to practise an insurrection within the realm, and also to use all the devices to them possible in outward parts, as well to defame and slander his Majesty, and his most virtuous doings and proceedings, as also to procure the impeachment and other destruction of his most royal person."³ Cromwell speaks also of their having been engaged in definite schemes, the object of which was rebellion;⁴ and although we

¹ The accounts are consistent on this subject with a single exception. A letter is extant from Fisher, in which he complained of suffering from the cold and from want of clothes. This must have been an accident. More was evidently treated well (see *MORE'S Life of More*); and all the circumstances imply that they were allowed to communicate freely with their friends, and to receive whatever comforts their friends were pleased to send them. The official statements on this subject are too positive and too minute to admit of a doubt. Cromwell writes thus to Cassalis: "Carceribus mancipati tractabantur humanius atque mitius quam par fuisset pro eorum demeritis; per Regem illis licebat proximorum colloquio et consuetudine frui. Ii fuerant illis apppositi præscriptique ministri quos a vinclis immunes antea fidos charosque habebant; id cibi genus eaque condimenta et vestitus eis concedebantur quæ eorum habitudini ac tuendæ sanitati, ipsi consanguinei, nepotes atque affines et amici judicabant esse magis accommoda."—*State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 634.

² *MORE'S Life of More*.

³ "Instructions given by the King's Majesty to the Right Reverend Father in God, his right trusty and well-beloved counsellor the Bishop of Hereford, whom his Majesty at this time sendeth unto the Princes of Germany."—*Rolls House MS.*

⁴ *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 635.

have here the *ex parte* statement of the government, and although such a charge would have been held to be justified by a proof that they had spoken generally against the Act of Supremacy, it may be allowed to prove that so far they were really guilty; and it is equally certain that for these two men to have spoken against the act was to have lent encouragement to the party of insurrection, the most powerful which that party could have received.

Thus, by another necessity, Fisher and More, at the beginning of May, were called upon for their submission. It was a hard case, for the bishop was sinking into the grave with age and sickness, and More had the highest reputation of any living man. But they had chosen to make themselves conspicuous as confessors for Catholic truth; though prisoners in the Tower, they were in fact the most effectual champions of the papal claims; and if their disobedience had been passed over, the statute could have been enforced against no one.

The same course was followed as with the Carthusian monks. On the 7th of May a deputation of the council waited on the prisoners in the Tower, for an acknowledgment of the supremacy. They refused: Fisher, after a brief hesitation, peremptorily; More declining to answer, but also giving an indirect denial. After repeated efforts had been made to move them, and made in vain, their own language, as in the preceding trials, furnished material for their indictment; and the law officers of the crown who were to conduct the prosecution were the witnesses under whose evidence they were to be tried. It was a strange proceeding, to be excused only, if excused at all, by the pressure of the times.¹

Either the king or his ministers, however, were slow in making up their minds. With the Carthusians, nine days only were allowed to elapse between the first examination and the final close at Tyburn. The case against More and Fisher was no less clear than against the monks; yet five weeks elapsed and the

¹ Compare *State Papers*, vol. i. pp. 431-36, with the Reports of the trials in the *Baga de Secretis*. Burnet has hastily stated that no Catholic was ever punished for merely denying the supremacy in official examinations. He has gone so far, indeed, as to call the assertions of Catholic writers to this effect "impudent falsehoods." Whether any Catholic was prosecuted who had not given other cause for suspicion, I do not know; but it is quite certain that Haughton and Fisher were condemned solely on the ground of their answers on these occasions, and that no other evidence was brought against them. The government clearly preferred this evidence as the most direct and unanswerable, for in both those cases they might have produced other witnesses had they cared to do so.

government still hesitated. Perhaps they were influenced by the high position of the greater offenders—perhaps there was some fear of the world's opinion, which, though it might be indifferent to the sacrifice of a few obscure ecclesiastics, yet would surely not pass over lightly the execution of men who stood out with so marked pre-eminence. The council board was unevenly composed. Cromwell, who divides with the king the responsibility of these prosecutions, had succeeded, not to the authority only of Wolsey, but to the hatred with which the ignoble plebeian was regarded by the patricians who were compelled to stoop before him. Lord Exeter was already looking with a cold eye on the revolution; and Norfolk and Suffolk, though zealous as the king himself for the independence of England, yet had all the instincts of aristocratic conservatism. Even Cromwell may have desired the triumph of winning over converts so distinguished, or may have shrunk from the odium which their deaths would bring upon him. Whatever was the cause of the delay, the privy council, who had been contented with a single examination of Haughton and his companions, struggled with their present difficulty week after week; and it is possible that, except from an extraneous impulse, some mode of escape might have been discovered. But as the sentence of Clement sealed the fate of the Nun of Kent, so the unwisdom of his successor bore similarly fatal fruits.

Paul III. had throughout the spring flattered Henry with expressions of sympathy, and had held out hopes of an approaching change of policy. He chose the present unfortunate juncture to expose the vanity of these professions; and as an intimation of the course which he intended to follow, he named the Bishop of Rochester, the one bishop who remained attached to Catherine's cause, a cardinal. Henry had appealed to a council, which the pope had promised to call; and Fisher, of all Englishmen, was chosen as the person whom the pope desired to represent the nation on its assembly. Even the very conclave at Rome were taken by surprise, and expressed themselves in no measured terms at the impolicy of this most foolish action. Cassalis, aware of the effect which the news would produce in England, hurried to such friends as he possessed in the conclave to protest against the appointment. The king, he said, would inevitably regard it as injurious to the realm and insulting to himself;¹ and it was madness at such a moment to trifle with Henry's displeasure.

¹ "Omnes Cardinales amicos nostros adivi; eisque demonstravi quam

The pope, alarmed at the expressions which he was told that Cassalis had used, sent in haste to urge him, if possible, to allay the storm. He was not ashamed to stoop to falsehood—but falsehood too awkward to deceive even the most willing credulity. He had thought, he said, of nothing but to please Henry. He had been urged by the King of France to seek a reconciliation with England, and in sending a hat to an English bishop he had meant nothing but a compliment. The general council would be held immediately; and it was desirable, according to the constitution of the church, that a cardinal of every nation should be present. He had no especial reason for choosing the Bishop of Rochester, except that he had a high reputation for learning, and he imagined, therefore, that the king would be gratified.¹ “He implored me,” Cassalis wrote, “to make his excuses to his Majesty, and to assure him how deeply he regretted his mistake, especially when I assured him that the step was of a kind which admitted of no excuse.”²

Cassalis himself was afterwards disposed to believe that the appointment was made in thoughtlessness, and that the pope at the moment had really forgotten Fisher's position.³ But this could gain no credit in England. The news reached the government in the middle of June, and determined the fate of the unfortunate bishop; and with it the fate, also, of his nobler companion. To the king, the pope's conduct appeared a defiance; and as a defiance he accepted it. In vain Fisher declared that he had not sought his ill-timed honours, and would not accept them. Neither his ignorance nor his refusal could avail him. Once more he was called upon to submit, with the intimation, that if he refused he must bear the consequences. His reply remained what it had been; and on the 17th of June he was taken⁴ down in a boat to Westminster Hall, where the special commission was sitting. The proceedings at his trial are thus briefly summed up in the official record:—“Thursday after the feast of St. Barnabas, John Fisher was brought to the

temere ac stulte fecerint in Roffensi in Cardinalem eligendo unde et potentissimum Regem et universum Regnum Angliæ mirum in modum lædunt vet injuriâ afficiunt; Roffensem enim virum esse gloriosum ut propter vanam gloriam in suâ opinione contra Regem adhuc sit permansurus; quâ etiam de causâ in carcere est et morti condemnatus.”—Cassalis to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 604.

¹ *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 604.

² Pontifex me vehemeneter rogavit, ut vias omnes tentare velim, quibus apud Regiam Majestatem excusatam hanc rem faciam, unde se plurimum dolere dixit, cum præsertim ego affirmaverim rem esse ejusmodi ut excusationem non recipiat.—Cassalis to Cromwell: *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.* p. 616.

⁴ *Historia Martyrum Anglorum.*

bar by Sir William Kingston, Constable of the Tower. Pleads not guilty. Venire awarded. Verdict—guilty. Judgment as usual in cases of treason.”¹

It was a swift sentence, and swiftly to be executed. Five days were allowed him to prepare himself; and the more austere features of the penalty were remitted with some show of pity. He was to die by the axe.

Mercy was not to be hoped for. It does not seem to have been sought. He was past eighty. The earth on the edge of the grave was already crumbling under his feet; and death had little to make it fearful. When the last morning dawned, he dressed himself carefully—as he said, for his marriage-day. The distance to Tower Hill was short. He was able to walk; and he tottered out of the prison-gates, holding in his hand a closed volume of the New Testament. The crowd flocked about him, and he was heard to pray that, as this book had been his best comfort and companion, so in that hour it might give him some special strength, and speak to him as from his Lord. Then opening it at a venture, he read: “This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” It was the answer to his prayer; and he continued to repeat the words as he was led forward. On the scaffold he chanted the *Te Deum*, and then, after a few prayers, knelt down, and meekly laid his head upon a pillow where neither care nor fear nor sickness would ever vex it more. Many a spectacle of sorrow had been witnessed on that tragic spot, but never one more sad than this; never one more painful to think or speak of. When a nation is in the throes of revolution, wild spirits are abroad in the storm; and poor human nature presses blindly forward with the burden which is laid upon it, tossing aside the obstacles in its path with a recklessness which, in calmer hours, it would fear to contemplate.

Sir Thomas More followed, his fortunes linked in death as in life to those of his friend. He was left to the last—in the hope, perhaps, that the example might produce an effect which persuasion could not. But the example, if that was the object, worked to far other purpose. From More’s high-tempered nature, such terrors fell harmless, as from enchanted armour. Death to him was but a passing from one country to another; and he had all along anticipated that his prison was the ante-chamber of the scaffold. He had, indeed, taken no pains to

¹ Report of the Trial of John Fisher: *BAGA DE SECRETIS*; Appendix to the *Third Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Records*.

avoid it. The king, according to the unsuspecting evidence of his daughter, Margaret Roper, had not accused him without cause of exciting a spirit of resistance. He had spent his time in encouraging Catholics to persevere to martyrdom for their faith. In his many conversations with herself, he had expressed himself with all freedom, and to others he had doubtless spoken as plainly as to her.¹

On the 7th of May he was examined by the same persons who examined Fisher; and he was interrogated again and again in subsequent interviews. His humour did not allow him to answer questions directly: he played with his catechists, and did not readily furnish them with materials for a charge. He had corresponded with Fisher in prison, on the conduct which he meant to pursue. Some of these letters had been burnt; but others were in the hands of the government, and would have been sufficient to sustain the prosecution, but they preferred his own words from his own lips. At length sufficient evidence was obtained. On the 26th of June, a true bill was found against him by the Grand Jury of Middlesex; and on the 1st of July the High Commission sat again in Westminster Hall, to try the most illustrious prisoner who ever listened to his sentence there.² He walked from the Tower—feebly, however, and with a stick, for he was weak from long confinement. On appearing at the bar, a chair was brought for him, and he was allowed to sit. The indictment was then read by the attorney-general. It set forth that Sir Thomas More, traitorously imagining and attempting to deprive the king of his title as supreme Head of the Church, did, on the 7th of May, when examined before Thomas Cromwell, the king's principal secretary, and divers other persons, whether he would accept the king as Head on

¹ If his opinions had been insufficient for his destruction, there was an influence at court which left no hope to him; the influence of one whose ways and doings were better known than they have been known to her modern admirers. "On a time," writes his grandson, "when he had questioned my aunt Roper of his wife and children, and the state of his house in his absence, he asked her at last how Queen Anne did. 'In faith, father,' said she, 'never better. There is nothing else at the court but dancing and sporting.' 'Never better?' said he; 'alas, Meg, alas, it pitieth me to remember unto what misery she will shortly come. These dances of hers will prove such dances that she will spurn our heads off like footballs, but it will not be long ere her head will dance the like dance.'"—*MORE'S Life of More*, p. 244.

² The composition of the commission is remarkable. When Fisher was tried, Lord Exeter sate upon it. On the trial of More, Lord Exeter was absent, but his place was taken by his cousin, Lord Montague, Reginald Pole's eldest brother, and Lady Salisbury's son. Willingly or unwillingly, the opposition nobles were made *participes criminis* in both these executions.

earth of the Church of England, pursuant to the statute, refuse to give a direct answer, but replied, "I will not meddle with any such matters, for I am fully determined to serve God and to think upon His passion, and my passage out of this world."¹ He was then charged with having written to Fisher that "The act of parliament was like a sword with two edges; for if a man answered one way it would confound his soul, and if the other way it would confound his body."² Finally and chiefly, he had spoken treasonable words in the Tower to Rich, the solicitor-general. Rich had endeavoured to persuade him, as Cranmer had endeavoured in his previous difficulty at Lambeth, that it was his duty as a subject to obey the law of the land. "Supposing it was enacted by act of parliament," the solicitor-general had said, "that I, Richard Rich, should be king, and that it should be treason to deny it, what would be the offence if you, Sir Thomas More, were to say that I was king?" More had answered that, in his conscience, he would be bound by the act of parliament, and would be obliged to accept Rich as king. He would put another case, however. "Suppose it should be enacted by parliament, *quod Deus non esset Deus*, and that opposing the act should be treason, if it were asked of him, Richard Rich, whether he would say *Quod Deus non erat Deus*, according to this statute, and if he were to say No, would he not offend?" Rich had replied, "Certainly, because it is impossible, *quod Deus non esset Deus*; but why, Master More, can you not accept the king as chief Head of the Church of England, just as you would that I should be made king, in which case you agree that you would be obliged to acknowledge me as king?" "To which More, persevering in his treasons, had answered to Rich, that the cases were not similar, because the king could be made by parliament and deprived by parliament;³ but in the first case the subject could not be obliged, because his consent could not be given for that in parliament."

This was the substance of the indictment. As soon as it was read, the lord chancellor rose, and told the prisoner that he saw how grievously he had offended the king; it was not too late to ask for mercy, however, which his Majesty desired to show.

¹ I take my account of the indictment from the government record. It is, therefore, their own statement of their own case.—Trial of Sir Thomas More: BAGA DE SECRETIS, pouch 7, bundle 3.

² Fisher had unhappily used these words on his own examination; and the identity of language was held a proof of traitorous confederacy.

³ If this was the constitutional theory, "divine right" was a Stuart fiction.

"My lord," More replied, "I have great cause to thank your honour for your courtesy, but I beseech Almighty God that I may continue in the mind that I am in through His grace unto death." To the charges against him he pleaded "not guilty," and answered them at length. He could not say indeed that the facts were not true; for although he denied that he had "practised" against the supremacy, he could not say that he had consented to it, or that he ever would consent; but like the Prior of the Charterhouse, he could not admit himself guilty when he had only obeyed his conscience. The jury retired to consider, and in a quarter of an hour returned with their verdict. The chancellor, after receiving it, put the usual question, what the prisoner could say in arrest of judgment. More replied, but replied with a plea which it was impossible to recognise, by denouncing the statute under which he was tried, and insisting on the obligation of obedience to the see of Rome. Thus the sentence was inevitable. It was pronounced in the ordinary form; but the usual punishment for treason was commuted, as it had been with Fisher, to death upon the scaffold; and this last favour was communicated as a special instance of the royal clemency. More's wit was always ready. "God forbid," he answered, "that the king should show any more such mercy unto any of my friends; and God bless all my posterity from such pardons."¹

The pageant was over, for such a trial was little more. As the procession formed to lead back the "condemned traitor" to the Tower, the commissioners once more adjured him to have pity on himself, and offered to re-open the court if he would reconsider his resolution. More smiled, and replied only a few words of graceful farewell.

"My lords," he said, "I have but to say that, like as the blessed Apostle St. Paul was present at the death of the martyr Stephen, keeping their clothes that stoned him, and yet they be now both saints in heaven, and there shall continue friends for ever, so I trust, and shall therefore pray, that though your lordships have been on earth my judges, yet we may hereafter meet in heaven together to our everlasting salvation; and God preserve you all, especially my sovereign lord the king, and grant him faithful councillors."

He then left the hall, and to spare him the exertion of the walk he was allowed to return by water. At the Tower stairs one of those scenes occurred which have cast so rich a pathos

¹ MORE'S *Life of More*, p. 271.

round the closing story of this illustrious man. "When Sir Thomas," writes the grandson, "was now come to the Tower wharf, his best beloved child, my aunt Roper, desirous to see her father, whom she feared she should never see in this world after, to have his last blessing, gave there attendance to meet him; whom as soon as she had espied she ran hastily unto him, and without consideration or care for herself, passing through the midst of the throng and guard of men, who with bills and halberts compassed him round, there openly in the sight of them all embraced him, and took him about the neck and kissed him, not able to say any word but 'Oh, my father! oh, my father!' He, liking well her most natural and dear affection towards him, gave her his fatherly blessing; telling her that whatsoever he should suffer, though he were innocent, yet it was not without the will of God; and that He knew well enough all the secrets of her heart, counselling her to accommodate her will to God's blessed pleasure, and to be patient for his loss.

"She was no sooner parted from him, and had gone scarce ten steps, when she, not satisfied with the former farewell, like one who had forgot herself, ravished with the entire love of so worthy a father, having neither respect to herself nor to the press of people about him, suddenly turned back, and ran hastily to him, and took him about the neck and divers times together kissed him; whereat he spoke not a word, but carrying still his gravity, tears fell also from his eyes; yea, there were very few in all the troop who could refrain hereat from weeping, no, not the guard themselves. Yet at last with a full heart she was severed from him, at which time another of our women embraced him; and my aunt's maid Dorothy Collis did the like, of whom he said after, it was homely but very lovingly done. All these and also my grandfather witnessed that they smelt a most odoriferous smell to come from him, according to that of Isaac, 'The scent of my son is as the scent of a field which the Lord has blessed.'"¹

More's relation with this daughter forms the most beautiful feature in his history. His letters to her in early life are of unequalled grace, and she was perhaps the only person whom he very deeply loved. He never saw her again. The four days which remained to him he spent in prayer and in severe bodily discipline. On the night of the 5th of July, although he did not know the time which had been fixed for his execution, yet with an instinctive feeling that it was near, he sent her his hair shirt

¹ More's *Life of More*, pp. 276-7.

and whip, as having no more need for them, with a parting blessing of affection.

He then lay down and slept quietly. At daybreak he was awoke by the entrance of Sir Thomas Pope, who had come to confirm his anticipations, and to tell him it was the king's pleasure that he should suffer at nine o'clock that morning. He received the news with utter composure. "I am much bounden to the king," he said, "for the benefits and honours he has bestowed upon me; and so help me God, most of all am I bounden to him that it pleaseth his Majesty to rid me so shortly out of the miseries of this present world."

Pope told him the king desired that he would not "use many words on the scaffold." "Mr. Pope," he answered, "you do well to give me warning, for otherwise I had purposed somewhat to have spoken; but no matter wherewith his Grace should have cause to be offended. Howbeit, whatever I intended, I shall obey his Highness's command."

He afterwards discussed the arrangements for his funeral, at which he begged that his family might be present; and when all was settled, Pope rose to leave him. He was an old friend. He took More's hand and wrung it, and quite overcome, burst into tears.

"Quiet yourself, Mr. Pope," More said, "and be not comforted, for I trust we shall once see each other full merrily, when we shall live and love together in eternal bliss."¹

As soon as he was alone he dressed in his most elaborate costume. It was for the benefit, he said, of the executioner who was to do him so great a service. Sir William Kingston remonstrated, and with some difficulty induced him to put on a plainer suit; but that his intended liberality should not fail, he sent the man a gold angel in compensation, "as a token that he maliced him nothing, but rather loved him extremely."

"So about nine of the clock he was brought by the Lieutenant out of the Tower, his beard being long, which fashion he had never before used, his face pale and lean, carrying in his hands a red cross, casting his eyes often towards heaven." He had been unpopular as a judge, and one or two persons in the crowd were insolent to him; but the distance was short and soon over, as all else was nearly over now.

¹ "And, further to put him from his melancholy, Sir Thomas More did take his urinal, and cast his water, saying merrily, 'I see no danger but the man that owns this water may live longer, if it please the king.'"—*MORE'S Life*, p. 283. I cannot allow myself to suppress a trait so eminently characteristic.

The scaffold had been awkwardly erected, and shook as he placed his foot upon the ladder. "See me safe up," he said to Kingston. "For my coming down I can shift for myself." He began to speak to the people, but the sheriff begged him not to proceed, and he contented himself with asking for their prayers, and desiring them to bear witness for him that he died in the faith of the holy Catholic church, and a faithful servant of God and the king. He then repeated the Miserere psalm on his knees; and when he had ended and had risen, the executioner, with an emotion which promised ill for the manner in which his part in the tragedy would be accomplished, begged his forgiveness. More kissed him. "Thou art to do me the greatest benefit that I can receive," he said. "Pluck up thy spirit, man, and be not afraid to do thine office. My neck is very short. Take heed therefore that thou strike not awry for saving of thine honesty." The executioner offered to tie his eyes. "I will cover them myself," he said; and binding them in a cloth which he had brought with him, he knelt and laid his head upon the block. The fatal stroke was about to fall, when he signed for a moment's delay while he moved aside his beard. "Pity that should be cut," he murmured, "that has not committed treason." With which strange words, the strangest perhaps ever uttered at such a time, the lips most famous through Europe for eloquence and wisdom closed for ever.

"So," concludes his biographer, "with alacrity and spiritual joy he received the fatal axe, which no sooner had severed the head from the body, but his soul was carried by angels into everlasting glory, where a crown of martyrdom was placed upon him which can never fade nor decay; and then he found those words true which he had often spoken, that a man may lose his head and have no harm."¹

This was the execution of Sir Thomas More, an act which was sounded out into the far corners of the earth, and was the world's wonder as well for the circumstances under which it was perpetrated, as for the preternatural composure with which it was borne. Something of his calmness may have been due to his natural temperament, something to an unaffected weariness of a world which in his eyes was plunging into the ruin of the latter days. But those fair hues of sunny cheerfulness caught their colour from the simplicity of his faith; and never was there a Christian's victory over death more grandly evidenced than in that last scene lighted with its lambent humour.

¹ MORE'S *Life of More*, p. 287.

History will rather dwell upon the incidents of the execution than attempt a sentence upon those who willed that it should be. It was at once most piteous and most inevitable. The hour of retribution had come at length, when at the hands of the Roman church was to be required all the righteous blood which it had shed, from the blood of Raymond of Toulouse to the blood of the last victim who had blackened into ashes at Smithfield. The voices crying underneath the altar had been heard upon the throne of the Most High, and woe to the generation of which the dark account had been demanded.

In whatever light, however, we may now think of these things, the effect in Europe was instantaneous and electrical. The irritation which had accompanied the excommunication by Clement had died away in the difficulty of executing the censures. The papal party had endeavoured to persuade themselves that the king was acting under a passing caprice. They had believed that the body of the people remained essentially Catholic; and they had trusted to time, to discontent, to mutiny, to the consequences of what they chose to regard as the mere indulgence of criminal passion, to bring Henry to his senses. To threats and anathemas, therefore, had again succeeded fair words and promises, and intrigues and flatteries; and the pope and his advisers, so long accustomed themselves to promise and to mean nothing, to fulminate censures in form, and to treat human life as a foolish farce upon the stage, had dreamed that others were like themselves. In the rough awakening out of their delusion, as with a stroke of lightning, popes, cardinals, kings, emperors, ambassadors, were startled into seriousness; and, the diplomatic meshwork all rent and broken, they fell at once each into their places, with a sense suddenly forced upon them that it was no child's play any longer. The King of England was in earnest, it seemed. The assumption of the supremacy was a fixed purpose, which he was prepared to make a question of life and death; and with this resolution they must thenceforward make their account.

On the 1st of June, Cassalis wrote¹ from Rome that the French ambassador had received a letter concerning certain friars who had been put to death in England for denying the king to be Head of the Church. The letter had been read in the consistory, and was reported to be written in a tone of the deepest commiseration. There had been much conversation about it, the French bishops having been louder than any

¹ *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 606.

in their denunciations; and the form of the execution was described as having been most barbarous. Some of the cardinals had said that they envied the monks their deaths in such a cause, and wished that they had been with them. "I desired my informant," Cassalis said, "to suggest to these cardinals, that if they were so anxious on the subject, they had better pay a visit to England." And he concluded, in cipher, "I cannot tell very well what to think of the French. An Italian told me he had heard the Most Christian king himself say, that although he was obliged to press upon the pope the requests of the king of England, yet that these requests were preposterous, and could not be granted."

The deaths of a few poor monks would soon have been forgiven; the execution of Fisher first really revealed the truth. No sooner was the terrible reply of Henry to his promotion to the cardinalate made known than the conclave was instantly summoned. Cardinal Tournon described the scene upon the scaffold in language which moved all his audience to tears.¹ The pope, in a paroxysm of anger, declared that if he had seen his own nephews murdered in his presence, it would not have so much affected him; and Cassalis said he heard, from good authority, that they would do their worst, and intended to make the Bishop of Rochester's death of more account than that of the martyr St. Thomas.²

Nor was the anger or the surprise confined to Rome. Through England, through France, through Flanders, even among the Protestants of Germany, there rose a simultaneous outcry of astonishment. Rumour flew to and fro with a thousand falsehoods; and the unfortunate leaven of the Anne Boleyn marriage told fatally to destroy that appearance of probity of motive so indispensable to the defence of the government. Even Francis I. forgot his caution, and dared to remonstrate. He wrote to entreat his good brother to content himself for the future with banishing such offenders, and sparing the extremity of his penalties.

Unfortunately, the question which was at issue was European as well as English; and every exile who was driven from England would have become, like Reginald Pole, a missionary of a holy war against the infidel king. Whatever else might have been possible, banishment was more perilous than pardon.

But the indignation was so general and so serious, that Henry thought it well to offer an explanation of his conduct, both at

¹ Cassalis to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. vii. pp. 620-21.

² *Ibid.*

home and abroad. With his own people, he communicated through the lay authorities, not choosing to trust himself on this occasion to the clergy. The magistrates at the quarter sessions were directed "to declare to the people the treasons committed by the late Bishop of Rochester and Sir Thomas More; who thereby, and by divers secret practices, of their malicious minds intended to seminate, engender, and breed a most mischievous and seditious opinion, not only to their own confusion, but also of divers others, who have lately suffered execution according to their demerits."¹ To Francis, Cromwell instructed Gardiner, who was ambassador in Paris, to reply very haughtily. The English government, he said, had acted on clear proof of treason; treason so manifest, and tending so clearly to the total destruction of the commonwealth of the realm, that the condemned persons "were well worthy, if they had a thousand lives, to have suffered ten times a more terrible death and execution than any of them did suffer." The laws which the king had made were "not without substantial grounds;" but had been passed "by great and mature advice, counsel, and deliberation of the whole policy of the realm, and" were "indeed no new laws, but of great antiquity, now renovate and renewed in respect to the common weal of the same realm."

With respect to the letter of the King of France, Gardiner was to say, it was "not a little to his Highness's marvel that the French king would ever counsel or advise him, if in case hereafter any such like offender should happen to be in the realm, that he should rather banish them, than in such wise execute them, . . . supposing it to be neither the office of a friend nor a brother, that he would counsel the King's Highness to banish his traitors into strange parts, where they might have good occasion, time, place, and opportunity to work their feast of treason and conspiracy the better against the king and this his realm. In which part," concluded Cromwell, "ye shall somewhat engrieve the matter, after such sort that it may well appear to the French king that the King's Highness may take those his counsels both strangely and unkindly."²

With the German princes Henry was scarcely less imperious;³

¹ STYVE'S *Memor. Eccles.*, vol. i., Appendix, p. 211. These words are curious as directly attributing the conduct of the monks to the influence of More and Fisher.

² Cromwell to Gardiner: BURNET'S *Collectanea*, pp. 460-1.

³ "If the Duke of Saxe, or any of the other princes, shall in their conference with him, expostulate or show themselves displeased with such information as they may perceive have had, touching the attainder and execution of the late Bishop of Rochester and Sir Thomas More, the said

and it is noteworthy, that the most elaborate defence which he condescended to make, is that which was sent to Sir Gregory Cassalis, to be laid before the pope. He chose that the Roman court should understand distinctly the grounds on which he had acted; and this despatch (which was written by Cromwell) shows more clearly than any other state paper which remains to us, the light in which the reforming party desired their conduct to be regarded.

It was written in reply to the letter in which Cassalis reported the irritation of the Roman court, and enters into the whole ground of complaint against More and Fisher.

"I have signified," wrote Cromwell, "to the King's Highness the purport of your late letters, and as they contained many things which were very welcome to his Majesty, so he could not sufficiently marvel that the pope should have conceived so great offence at the deaths of the Bishop of Rochester and Sir Thomas More. And albeit his Majesty is not bound to render account of his actions except to God, whom in thought and deed he is ever desirous to obey; nevertheless that his royal name may not be evil spoken of by malicious tongues, from want of knowledge of the truth, I will tell you briefly what has been done in this matter.

"After that his Majesty, with the favour and assistance of Almighty God, had brought his cause to an end, by the consent and authority of unprejudiced persons of the most approved learning in Christendom,—and after he had confirmed it by the very rule of truth, these men, who had looked to see a far different conclusion, finding now no hopes of disturbing the settle-

Bishop shall thereunto answer and say, that the same were by order of his laws found to be false traitors and rebels to his Highness and his crown. The order of whose attainder with the causes thereof, he may declare unto them, saying that in case the King's Highness should know that they would conceive any sinister opinion of his Grace, for the doing of any act within his realm, his Grace should not only have cause to think they used not with him the office of friendship, which would not by any report conceive other opinion of so noble a prince as he is than were both just and honourable; but also to note in them less constancy of judgment than he verily thinketh they have. And hereupon the said Bishop shall dissuade them from giving credit to any such report, as whereby they shall offend God in the judgment of evil upon their neighbour; and cause his Majesty to muse that they would of him, being a prince of honour, conceive any other opinion than his honour and friendship towards them doth require. Setting this forth with such a stomach and courage as they may not only perceive the false traitorous dealings of the said persons; but consider what folly it were in them upon light report to judge of another prince's proceedings otherwise than they would a foreign prince should judge of them."—*Instructions to the Bishop of Hereford by the King's Highness: Rolls House MS.*

ment thus made, began to meditate other purposes. And when our good king, according to his princely duty, was devising measures for the quiet and good order of the realm, and for the correction of manners now largely fallen to decay, this, so great a benefit to the commonweal, they did, so far as in them lay, endeavour, though without effect, under pretence of dissembled honesty, to obstruct and oppose. Manifest proofs of their wicked designs were in the hands of the King's Grace; but his Majesty consented rather to pass over their offence without notice, hoping to recall them to a better mind, as having before been in some good estimation with him.

"But they in whom ambition, love of self, and a peculiar conceit of wisdom had bred another persuasion, obstinately abused this kindness of their most noble prince. And when on a certain day there was order issued for the assembly of the great council of the realm, they made secret inquiry to learn the measures which would there be treated of. Whatsoever they discovered or conjectured, forthwith they debated in private council among themselves, arriving upon each point at conclusions other than those which the interests of the realm did require; and they fortified those conclusions with such array of arguments and reasons, that with no great labour the ignorant people might have been dangerously deceived.

"At length knowing that they had incurred the king's displeasure, and fearing lest they might fail of accomplishing their purposes, they chose out persons on whose courage, readiness, and devotion to themselves they could depend; and taking these men into their councils, they fed them with the poison which they had conceived, forgetting their allegiance to their king, and their duty to their country.¹ Thus were their seditious opinions scattered over the country. And when his Highness began to trace this impious conspiracy to its source, Sir Thomas More and the Bishop of Rochester were found to be the undoubted authors of the same; and their guilt was proved against them by the evidence of their own handwrit, and the confessions of their own lips. For these causes, therefore, and for many others of like kind, our most gracious sovereign was compelled to imprison them as rebellious subjects, as disturbers of the public peace, and as movers of sedition and tumult. Nor was it possible for him to do other than punish them, unless, after their crimes had been detected, he had so far forgotten his

¹ It will be observed that many important facts are alluded to in this letter of which we have no other knowledge.

duty as to leave the contagion to spread unchecked, to the utter destruction of the nation. They were in consequence thrown into the Tower, where, however, their treatment was far different from what their demerits had deserved; they were allowed the society of their friends; their own servants were admitted to attend upon them, and they received all such indulgences in food and dress as their families desired. Clemency, however, produced no effect on persons in whom duty and allegiance had given place to treason and malice. They chose rather to persist in their wicked courses than to make trial by repentance of the king's goodness. For after that certain laws had been decreed by authority of parliament, and had been by the whole nation admitted and accepted as expedient for the realm, and agreeable to true religion, they alone refused their consent to these laws, hoping that something might occur to sustain them in their impiety; and while professing to have left all care and thought for human things, they were considering by what arguments, in furtherance of their seditious purposes, they might, to the common hurt, elude, refute, and disturb the said laws.

"Of this their treason there are proofs extant—letters written, when ink failed them, with chalk or charcoal, and passed secretly from one to the other. Our most merciful king could therefore no longer tolerate their grievous faults. He allowed them to be tried by process of ordinary law. They were found guilty of high treason, and sentenced to death. Their punishment was milder than that which the law prescribed, or which their crimes had deserved; and many persons have by this example been brought to a better mind."¹

To Cromwell evidently the case appeared so clear as to require no apology. To modern writers it has appeared so clear as to admit of none. The value of the defence turns upon the point of the actual danger to the state, and the extent to which the conduct of the sufferers imperilled the progress of the Reformation. As written for the eyes of the pope and cardinals, however, such a letter could be understood only as daring them to do their worst. It ignored the very existence of such rules of judgment as the heads of the Roman church would alone acknowledge, and represented the story as it appeared from the position which England had assumed on its revolt from its old allegiance.

There were no more false efforts at conciliation, and open war thenceforth appeared to be the only possible relation between

¹ Cromwell to Catholics: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 833.

the papacy and Henry VIII. Paul III. replied, or designed to reply, with his far-famed bull of interdict and deposition, which, though reserved at the moment in deference to Francis of France, and not issued till three years later, was composed in the first burst of his displeasure.¹ The substance of his voluminous anathemas may be thus briefly epitomised.

The pope, quoting and applying to himself the words of Jeremiah, "Behold, I have set thee over nations and kingdoms, that thou mayest root out and destroy, and that thou mayest plant and build again," addressed Henry as a disobedient vassal. Already lying under the censures of the church, he had gone on to heap crime on crime; and therefore, a specific number of days being allowed him to repent and make his submission, at the expiration of this period of respite the following sentence was to take effect.

The king, with all who abetted him in his crimes, was pronounced accursed—cut off from the body of Christ, to perish. When he died, his body should lie without burial; his soul, blasted with anathema, should be cast into hell for ever. The lands of his subjects who remained faithful to him were laid under an interdict: their children were disinherited, their marriages illegal, their wills invalid; only by one condition could they escape their fate—by instant rebellion against the apostate prince. All officers of the crown were absolved from their oaths; all subjects, secular or ecclesiastic, from their allegiance. The entire nation, under penalty of excommunication, was commanded no longer to acknowledge Henry as their sovereign.² No true son of the church should hold intercourse with him or his adherents. They must neither trade with them, speak with them, nor give them food. The clergy, leaving behind a few of their number to baptise the new-born infants, were to withdraw from the accursed land, and return no more

¹ Paul himself said that it was reserved at the intercession of the Princes of Europe. Intercession is too mild a word for the species of interference which was exerted. The pope sent a draft of the intended bull to France; and the king having no disposition to countenance exaggerated views of papal authority, spoke of it as *impudentissimum quoddam breve*; and said that he must send the Cardinal of Lorraine to Rome, to warn his Holiness that his pretence of setting himself above princes could by no means be allowed; by such impotent threats he might not only do no good, but he would make himself a laughing-stock to all the world.—Christopher Mount to Henry VIII.: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 628.

² His sub excommunicationis poenā mandamus ut ab ejusdem Henrici regis, suorumque officialium judicium et magistratum quorumcunque obedientiā, penitus et omnino recedant, nec illos in superiores recognoscant neque illorum mandatis obtemperent.—Bull of Pope Paul against Henry VIII

till it had submitted. If the king, trusting to force, persevered in his iniquity, the lords and commons of England, dukes, marquises, earls, and all other persons, were required, under the same penalty of excommunication, to expel him from the throne; and the Christian princes of Europe were called on to show their fidelity to the Holy See, by aiding in so godly a work.

In conclusion, as the king had commanded his clergy to preach against the pope in their churches, so the pope commanded them to retaliate upon the king, and with bell, book, and candle declare him cursed.

This was loud thunder; nor, when abetted by Irish massacres and English treasons, was it altogether impotent. If Henry's conceptions of the royal supremacy were something imperious, the papal supremacy was not more modest in its self-assertion; and the language of Paul III. went far to justify the rough measures by which his menaces were parried. If any misgiving had remained in the king's mind on the legitimacy of the course which he had pursued, the last trace of it must have been obliterated by the perusal of this preposterous bombast.

For the moment, as I said, the bull was suspended through the interference of Francis. But Francis remained in communion with the See of Rome: Francis was at that moment labouring to persuade the Lutheran states in Germany to return to communion with it: and Henry knew that, although in their hearts the European powers might estimate the pope's pretences at their true value, yet the bull of excommunication might furnish a convenient and dangerous pretext against him in the event of a Catholic combination. His position was full of peril; and in spite of himself, he was driven once more to seek for an alliance among the foreign Protestants, before the French intrigues should finally anticipate him.

That he really might be too late appeared an immediate likelihood. The quarrel between the Lutherans and the followers of Zwingle, the Anabaptist anarchy and the increasing confusion throughout the Protestant states, had so weighed on Luther's spirit that he was looking for the end of all things and the coming of Christ; and although Luther himself never quailed, too many "murmurers in the wilderness" were looking wistfully back into Egypt. The French king, availing himself skilfully of the turning tide, had sent the Bishop of Paris to the courts of Saxony and Bavaria, in the beginning of August, to feel his way towards a reconciliation; and his efforts had been attended with remarkable success.

The bishop had been in communication with Melancthon and many of the leading Lutheran theologians upon the terms on which they would return to the church. The Protestant divines had drawn up a series of articles, the first of which was a profession of readiness to recognise the authority of the pope;¹ accompanying this statement with a declaration that they would accept any terms not plainly unjust and impious. These articles were transmitted to Paris, and again re-transmitted to Germany, with every prospect of a mutually satisfactory result; and Melancthon was waiting only till the bishop could accompany him, to go in person to Paris, and consult with the Sorbonne.²

This momentary (for it was only momentary) weakness of the German Protestants was in part owing to their want of confidence in Henry VIII.³ The king had learnt to entertain a respect for the foreign Reformers, far unlike the repugnance of earlier years; but the prospect of an alliance with them had hitherto been too much used by him as a weapon with which to menace the Catholic powers, whose friendship he had not concealed that he would prefer. The Protestant princes had shrunk therefore, and wisely, from allowing themselves to be made the instruments of worldly policy; and the efforts at a combination had hitherto been illusive and ineffectual. Danger now compelled the king to change his hesitation into more honest advances. If Germany accepted the mediations of Francis, and returned to communion with Rome; and if, under the

¹ The Venetian Ambassador told Mount that the first article stood thus, "Admittitur Protestas Pontificis Maximi absolute;" to which Mount says he answered, "Hoc Latinum magis sapit Sorbonam Parisiensem quam Witenbergensem Minervam." Du Bellay afterwards said that the saving clause was attached to it, "Modo secundum verbum Dei omnia judicet;" and that this had been added at the desire of the French king; which Mount did not believe—and indeed found great difficulty in discovering any credible account of what was really taking place, beyond the fact that the Lutherans were so anxious for an agreement, that they were walking with open eyes into a net which would strangle them.—See *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 630, etc.

² Ibid.

³ Ego colendissime Patrone (si scribere licet quod sentio) non nihil nocere puto amicitiae ineundae et confirmandae inter serenissimum Regem nostrum et Principes Germanos, nimiam serenissimi Regis nostri prudentiam. Germanorum animi tales sunt ut apertam et simplicem amicitiam colant et expetant. Ego quoque Germanos Principes super hac causa saepius expostulantes audiui, ut qui suspensam hanc et causariam amicitiam not satis probarent. Dixerunt enim hac re fieri ut plerique alii foedus secum inire detrectarent et refugerunt qui id ultro factum fuerant si serenissimum Angliae Regem aperte stare cernerent.—Mount to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 625.

circumstances of a re-union, a general council were assembled; there could be little doubt of the attitude in which a council, called together under such auspices, would place itself towards the movement in England. To escape so imminent a peril, Henry was obliged (as Elizabeth after him) to seek the support of a party from which he had shrunk: he was forced, in spite of himself, to identify his cause with the true cause of freedom, and consequently to admit an enlarged toleration of the Reformed doctrines in his own dominions. There could be little doubt of the support of the Germans, if they could be once assured that they would not again be trifled with; and a Protestant league, the steady object of Cromwell's efforts, seemed likely at length to be realised.

Different indeed would have been the future, both of England and for Germany, if such a league had been possible, if the pressure which compelled this most natural alliance had continued till it had cemented into rock. But the Tudors, representatives in this, as in so many other features of their character, of the people whom they governed, could never cordially unite themselves with a form of thought which permitted resistance to authority, and which they regarded as anarchic and revolutionary. They consented, when no alternative was left them, to endure for short periods a state of doubtful cordiality; but the connection was terminated at the earliest moment which safety permitted; in their hatred of disorder (for this feeling is the key alike to the strength and to the weakness of the Tudor family), they preferred the incongruities of Anglicanism to a complete reformation; and a "midge-madge"¹ of contradictory formularies to the simplicity of the Protestant faith. In essentials, the English movement was political rather than spiritual. What was gained for the faith, we owe first to Providence, and then to those accidents, one of which had now arisen, which compelled at intervals a deeper and a broader policy. To counteract the French emissaries, Christopher Mount, in August, and in September, Fox, Bishop of Hereford, were despatched to warn the Lutheran princes against their intrigues, and to point out the course which the interests of Northern Europe in the existing conjuncture required. The bishop's instructions were drawn by the king. He was to proceed direct to the court of Saxony, and, after presenting his letters of credit, was to address the elector to the following effect:

¹ This was Lord Burleigh's word for the constitution of the English Church.

" Besides and beyond the love, amity, and friendship which noble blood and progeny had carnally caused and continued in the heart of the King's Highness towards the said duke and his progenitors, and besides that kindness also which of late by mutual communication of gratuities had been not a little augmented and increased between them, there was also stirred up in the heart of the King's Highness a spiritual love and favour towards the said duke and his virtuous intents and proceedings; for that the said duke persisted and continued in his most virtuous mind to set forth, maintain, and defend the sincere teaching of the gospel and the perfect true understanding of the word of God. In that matter the King's Highness, also illuminated with the same spirit of truth, and wholly addict and dedicate to the advancement thereof, had employed great pain and travail to bring the same to the knowledge of his people and subjects, intending also further and further to proceed therein, as his Grace by good consultation should perceive might tend to the augmentation of the glory of God and the true knowledge of his word. His said Majesty was of such sincere meaning in the advancing [hereof] as his Grace would neither headily, without good advisement, and consultation, and conference with his friends, go in any part beyond the said truth, ne for any respect tarry or stay on this side the truth, but would proceed in the right straight mean way assuredly agreed upon. He had known of certainty divers who by their immoderate zeal or the excessive appetite to novelties had from darkness proceeded to much more darkness, wherein the Anabaptists and sacramentarians were guilty; so by secret report he had been advertised, that upon private communications and conferences, the learned men there [in Germany] had in certain points and articles yielded and relented from their first asseveration; by reason whereof it was much doubted whether by other degrees they might be dissuaded in some of the rest. The King's Highness therefore, being very desirous to know the truth therein, and to be ascertained in what points and articles the learned men there were so assuredly and constantly resolved as by no persuasion of man they could be turned from the same, had sent the Bishop of Hereford to the said duke, desiring and praying him in respect of the premises to entertain the said bishop friendly and familiarly concerning the matter aforesaid, as the mutual love carnally, and the zeal of both princes to the increase of the glory of God spiritually, did require." ¹

¹ Instructions to the Bishop of Hereford: *Rolls House MS.*

The bishop was then to speak of the council, the assembling of which he understood that the German princes so much desired. He was to dissuade them from pressing it, to the extent of his ability. They would find themselves opposed inevitably in all essential matters by the pope, the emperor, and the French king, whose factions united would outnumber and outvote them; and in the existing state of Europe, a general council would only compromise their position and embarrass their movements. If, however, notwithstanding his remonstrances, the princes persisted in their wish, then the bishop was to urge them to come to some understanding with England on the resolutions which they desired to maintain. Let them communicate to the English bishops such points "as they would stick to without relenting;" and the two countries, "standing together, would be so much stronger to withstand their adversaries." Without definitely promising to sign the Confession of Augsburg, Henry held out strong hopes that he might sign that Confession, if they would send representatives to London to discuss the articles of it with himself.¹ The bishop was to apologise for any previous slackness on the king's part in his communications with the elector, and to express his hopes, that for the future their relations might be those of cordial unanimity. He was especially to warn the elector to beware of re-admitting the papal supremacy under any pretext. The English had shaken off the pope, "provoked thereunto in such wise as would have provoked them rather to have expelled him from them by wrong, than to suffer him so to oppress them with injuries." If in Germany they "opened the great gate" to let him in again, he would rebuild "the fortresses that were thrown down, and by little and little bring all to the former estate again." Finally, with respect to the council—if a council there was to be—they must take care that it was held in a place indifferent, where truth might be heard or spoken; "considering that else in a council, were not the remedy that all good men sought, but the mischief that all good men did abhor."

¹ In case they shall require that the King's Majesty shall receive the whole confession of Germany as it is imprinted, the bishop shall say that when the King's Highness shall have seen and perused the articles of the league, and shall perceive that there is in it contained none other articles but such as may be agreeable with the Gospel, and such as his Highness ought and conveniently may maintain, it is not to be doubted, and also, "I durst boldly affirm," the said bishop shall say, "that the King's Highness will enter the same [league]." But it shall be necessary for the said duke and the princes confederate to send to the King's Highness such personages as might devise, conclude, and condescend in every article.—Instructions to the Bishop of Hereford: *Rolls House MS.*

These advances, consented to by Henry, were the act of Cromwell, and were designed as the commencement of a *Fœdus Evangelicum*—a league of the great Reforming nations of Europe. It was a grand scheme, and history can never cease to regret that it was grasped at with too faint a hand. The bishop succeeded in neutralising partially the scheming of the French, partially in attracting the sympathies of the German powers towards England; but the two great streams of the Teutonic race, though separated by but a narrow ridge of difference, were unable to reach a common channel. Their genius drove them into courses which were to run side by side for centuries, yet ever to remain divided. And if the lines in which their minds have flowed seem to be converging at last, and if hereafter Germans and English are again to unite in a single faith, the remote meeting point is still invisible, and the terms of possible agreement can be but faintly conjectured.

CHAPTER X

THE VISITATION OF THE MONASTERIES

MANY high interests in England had been injured by the papal jurisdiction; but none had suffered more vitally than those of the monastic establishments. These establishments had been injured, not by fines and exactions—for oppression of this kind had been terminated by the statutes of provisors,—but because, except at rare and remote intervals, they had been left to themselves, without interference and without surveillance. They were deprived of those salutary checks which all human institutions require if they are to be saved from sliding into corruption. The religious houses, almost without exception, were not amenable to the authority of the bishops. The several societies acknowledged obedience only to the heads of their order, who resided abroad; or to the pope, or to some papal delegate. Thus any regularly conducted visitation was all but impossible. The foreign superiors, who were forbidden by statute to receive for their services more than certain limited and reasonable fees, would not undertake a gratuitous labour; and the visitations, attempted with imperfect powers¹ by the English archbishops, could be resisted successfully under pleas of exemption and obedience to the rules of the orders.² Thus the abbeys had gone their own way, careless of the gathering indignation with which they were regarded by the people, and believing that in their position they held a sacred shield which would protect them for ever. In them, as throughout the Catholic system, the sadness of the condition into which they had fallen, was enhanced by the contrast between the theory and the degenerate reality. Originally, and for many hundred years after their foundation, the regular clergy were the finest body of men of which mankind in their chequered history can boast. They lived to illustrate,

¹ The English archbishops were embarrassed by the statutes of provisors in applying for plenary powers to Rome. If they accepted commissions they accepted them at their peril, and were compelled to caution in their manner of proceeding.

² 27 Hen. VIII. cap. 28. The statute says that many visitations had been made in the two hundred years preceding the Reformation, but had failed wholly of success.

in systematic simplicity, the universal law of sacrifice. In their three chief vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, they surrendered everything which makes life delightful. Their business on earth was to labour and to pray: to labour for other men's bodies, to pray for other men's souls. Wealth flowed in upon them; the world, in its instinctive loyalty to greatness, laid its lands and its possessions at their feet; and for a time was seen the notable spectacle of property administered as a trust; from which the owners reaped no benefit, except increase of toil. The genius of the age expended its highest efforts to provide fitting tabernacles for the divine spirit which they enshrined; and alike in village and city, the majestic houses of the Father of mankind and his especial servants towered up in sovereign beauty, symbols of the civil supremacy of the church, and of the moral sublimity of life and character which had won the homage and the admiration of the Christian nations. Ever at the sacred gates sate Mercy, pouring out relief from a never-failing store to the poor and the suffering; ever within the sacred aisles the voices of holy men were pealing heavenwards, in intercession for the sins of mankind; and influences so blessed were thought to exhale around those mysterious precincts, that the outcasts of society—the debtor, the felon, and the outlaw—gathered round the walls, as the sick men sought the shadow of the apostle, and lay there sheltered from the avenging hand till their sins were washed from off their souls. Through the storms of war and conquest the abbeys of the middle ages floated, like the ark upon the waves of the flood, inviolate in the midst of violence, through the awful reverence which surrounded them.

The soul of "religion,"¹ however, had died out of it for many generations before the Reformation. At the close of the fourteenth century, Wycliffe had cried that the rotting trunk cumbered the ground, and should be cut down. It had not been cut down; it had been allowed to stand for a hundred and fifty more years; and now it was indeed plain that it could remain no longer. The boughs were bare, the stem was withered, the veins were choked with corruption; the ancient life-tree of monasticism would blossom and bear fruit no more. Faith had sunk into superstition; duty had died into routine; and the monks, whose technical discipline was forgotten, and who were set free by their position from the discipline of ordinary duty, had travelled swiftly on the downhill road of human corruption.

¹ To enter "religion" was the technical expression for taking the vows.

Only light reference will be made in this place to the darker scandals by which the abbeys were dishonoured. Such things there really were, to an extent which it may be painful to believe, but which evidence too abundantly proves. It is better, however, to bury the recollection of the more odious forms of human depravity; and so soon as those who condemn the Reformation have ceased to deny what the painfulness of the subject only has allowed to remain disputed, the sins of the last English monks will sleep with them in their tombs. Here, in spite of such denials, the most offensive pictures shall continue to be left in the shade; and persons who wish to gratify their curiosity, or satisfy their unbelief, may consult the authorities for themselves.¹ I shall confine my own efforts rather to the explanation of the practical, and, in the highest sense of the word, political abuses, which, on the whole, perhaps, told most weightily on the serious judgment of the age.

The abbeys, then, as the State regarded them, existed for the benefit of the poor. The occupants for the time being were themselves under vows of poverty; they might appropriate to their personal use no portion of the revenues of their estates; they were to labour with their own hands, and administer their property for the public advantage. The surplus proceeds of the lands, when their own modest requirements had been supplied, were to be devoted to the maintenance of learning, to the exercise of a liberal hospitality, and to the relief of the aged, the impotent, and the helpless. The popular clamour of the day declared that these duties were systematically neglected; that two-thirds, at least, of the religious bodies abused their opportunities unfairly for their own advantage; and this at a time when the obligations of all property were defined as strictly as its rights, and negligent lay owners were promptly corrected by the State whenever occasion required. The monks, it was believed, lived in idleness, keeping vast retinues of servants to do the work which they ought to have done themselves.² They

¹ A summary of the condition of the Religious Houses, in the Cotton Library, Cleopatra, E 4; MS. Letters of the Visitors, in the same collection; three volumes of the correspondence of Richard Layton with Cromwell, in the State Paper Office; and the reports of the Visitations of 1489 and 1511, in the *Registers* of Archbishops Morton and Warham. For printed authorities, see *Suppression of the Monasteries*, published by the Camden Society; STYVE'S *Memorials*, vol. i., Appendix; FULLER'S *Ecclesiastical History*; and WILKINS'S *Concilia*, vol. iii.

² At Tewkesbury, where there was an abbot and thirty-two monks, I find payment made to a hundred and forty-four servants in livery, who were wholly engaged in the service of the abbey.—Particulars relating to the Dissolution of the Monasteries, section 5; BURNER'S *Collationes*, p. 86.

were accused of sharing dividends by mutual connivance, although they were forbidden by their rule to possess any private property whatever, and of wandering about the country in the disguise of laymen in pursuit of forbidden indulgences.¹ They were bound by their statutes to keep their houses full, and if their means were enlarged, to increase their numbers; they were supposed to have allowed their complement to fall to half, and sometimes to a third, of the original foundation, fraudulently reserving the enlarged profits to themselves. It was thought, too, that they had racked their estates; that having a life-interest only, they had encumbered them with debts, mortgages, and fines; that in some cases they had wholly alienated lands, of which they had less right to dispose than a modern rector of his glebe.² In the meantime, it was said that the poor were not fed, that hospitality was neglected, that the buildings and houses were falling to waste, that fraud and Simony prevailed among them from the highest to the lowest, that the abbots sold the presentations to the benefices which were in their gift, or dishonestly retained the cures of souls in their own hands, careless whether the duties of the parishes could or could not be discharged; and that, finally, the vast majority of the monks themselves were ignorant, self-indulgent, profligate, worthless, dissolute.

These, in addition to the heavier accusations, were the charges which the popular voice had for more than a century brought against the monasteries, which had led Wycliffe to denounce their existence as intolerable, the House of Commons to petition Henry IV. for the secularisation of their property, and Henry V. to appease the outcry, by the suppression of more than a hundred, as an ineffectual warning to the rest.³ At length, in the year 1489, at the instigation of Cardinal Morton, then Archbishop of Canterbury, a commission was issued by Innocent VIII. for a general investigation throughout England into the behaviour of the regular clergy. The pope said that he had heard, from persons worthy of credit, that abbots and monks in many places were systematically faithless to their vows; he conferred on the archbishop a special power of visitation, and directed him to admonish, to correct, to punish, as might seem

¹ See the Directions to the Visitors: BURNET's *Collectanea*, p. 74.

² See, for instance, *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 86.

³ "In a parliament held at Leicester, in 1414, the priories alien in England were given to the king; all their possessions to remain to the king and to his heirs for ever. And these priories were suppressed, to the number of more than a hundred houses."—*Stow's Chronicle*, p. 345.

to him to be desirable.¹ On the receipt of these instructions, Morton addressed the following letter to the superior of an abbey within a few miles of London—a peer of the realm, living in the full glare of notoriety—a person whose offences, such as they were, had been committed openly, palpably, and conspicuously in the face of the world:—

“John, by Divine permission, Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of all England, Legate of the Apostolic See, to William, Abbot of the Monastery of St. Alban’s, greeting.

“We have received certain letters under lead, the copies whereof we herewith send you, from our most holy Lord and Father in Christ, Innocent, by Divine Providence Pope, the eighth of that name. We therefore, John, the archbishop, the visitor, reformer, inquisitor, and judge therein mentioned, in reverence for the Apostolic See, have taken upon ourselves the burden of enforcing the said commission; and have determined that we will proceed by, and according to, the full force, tenour, and effect of the same.

“And it has come to our ears, being at once publicly notorious and brought before us upon the testimony of many witnesses worthy of credit, that you, the abbot aforementioned, have been of long time noted and diffamed, and do yet continue so noted, of Simony, of usury, of dilapidation and waste of the goods, revenues, and possessions of the said monastery, and of certain other enormous crimes and excesses hereafter written. In the rule, custody, and administration of the goods, spiritual and temporal, of the said monastery, you are so remiss, so negligent, so prodigal, that whereas the said monastery was of old times founded and endowed by the pious devotion of illustrious princes of famous memory, heretofore kings of this land, the most noble progenitors of our most serene Lord and King that now is, in order that true religion might flourish there, that the name of the Most High, in whose honour and glory it was instituted, might be duly celebrated there;

“And whereas, in days heretofore the regular observance of the said rule was greatly regarded, and hospitality was diligently kept;

“Nevertheless, for no little time, during which you have presided in the same monastery, you and certain of your fellow monks and brethren (whose blood, it is feared, through your neglect, a severe Judge will require at your hand) have relaxed the measure and form of religious life; you have laid aside the

¹ The commission is in MORTON’S *Register*, MS., Lambeth Library.

pleasant yoke of contemplation, and all regular observances; hospitality, alms, and those other offices of piety which of old time were exercised and ministered therein have decreased, and by your faults, your carelessness, your neglect and deed, do daily decrease more and more, and cease to be regarded—the pious vows of the founders are defrauded of their just intent; the antient rule of your order is deserted; and not a few of your fellow monks and brethren, as we most deeply grieve to learn, giving themselves over to a reprobate mind, laying aside the fear of God, do lead only a life of lasciviousness—nay, as is horrible to relate, be not afraid to defile the holy places, even the very churches of God, by infamous intercourse with nuns.

“ You yourself, moreover, among other grave enormities and abominable crimes whereof you are guilty, and for which you are noted and diffamed, have, in the first place, admitted a certain married woman, named Elena Germyn, who has separated herself without just cause from her husband, and for some time past has lived in adultery with another man, to be a nun or sister in the house or Priory of Bray, lying, as you pretend, within your jurisdiction. You have next appointed the same woman to be prioress of the said house, notwithstanding that her said husband was living at the time, and is still alive. And finally, Father Thomas Sudbury, one of your brother monks, publicly, notoriously, and without interference or punishment from you, has associated, and still associates, with this woman as an adulterer with his harlot.

“ Moreover, divers other of your brethren and fellow monks have resorted, and do resort, continually to her and other women at the same place, as to a public brothel or receiving house, and have received no correction therefor.

“ Nor is Bray the only house into which you have introduced disorder. At the nunnery of Sapwell, which you also contend to be under your jurisdiction, you change the prioresses and superiors again and again at your own will and caprice. Here, as well as at Bray, you depose those who are good and religious; you promote to the highest dignities the worthless and the vicious. The duties of the order are cast aside; virtue is neglected; and by these means so much cost and extravagance has been caused, that to provide means for your indulgence you have introduced certain of your brethren to preside in their houses under the name of guardians, when in fact they are no guardians, but thieves and notorious villains; and with their help you have caused and permitted the goods of the same

priorities to be dispensed, or to speak more truly to be dissipated, in the above-described corruptions and other enormous and accursed offences. Those places once religious are rendered and reputed as it were profane and impious; and by your own and your creatures' conduct are so impoverished as to be reduced to the verge of ruin.

"In like manner, also, you have dealt with certain other cells of monks, which you say are subject to you, even within the monastery of the glorious proto-martyr, Alban himself. You have dilapidated the common property; you have made away with the jewels; the copses, the woods, the underwood, almost all the oaks and other forest trees, to the value of eight thousand marks and more, you have made to be cut down without distinction, and they have by you been sold and alienated. The brethren of the abbey, some of whom, as is reported, are given over to all the evil things of the world, neglect the service of God altogether. They live with harlots and mistresses publicly and continuously, within the precincts of the monastery and without. Some of them, who are covetous of honour and promotion, and desirous therefore of pleasing your cupidity, have stolen and made away with the chalices and other jewels of the church. They have even sacrilegiously extracted the precious stones from the very shrine of St. Alban; and you have not punished these men, but have rather knowingly supported and maintained them. If any of your brethren be living justly and religiously, if any be wise and virtuous, these you straightway depress and hold in hatred. . . . You"

But this overwhelming document need not be transcribed further. It pursues its way through mire and filth to its most lame and impotent conclusion. The abbot was not deposed; he was invited merely to reconsider his conduct, and, if possible, amend it.

Offences similar in kind and scarcely less gross were exposed at Waltham, at St. Andrew's, Northampton, at Calais, and at other places.¹ Again, a reprimand was considered to be an adequate punishment.

Evils so deep and so abominable would not yield to languid treatment; the visitation had been feeble in its execution and limited in extent. In 1511 a second was attempted by Archbishop Warham.² This inquiry was more partial than the first, yet similar practices were brought to light: women introduced

¹ MORTON'S *Register*, MS., Lambeth.

² WARHAM'S *Register*, MS., Lambeth.

to religious houses; nuns and abbesses accusing one another of incontinency; the alms collected in the chapels squandered by the monks in licentiousness. Once more, no cure was attempted beyond a paternal admonition.¹ A third effort was made by Wolsey twelve years later: again exposure followed, and again no remedy was found.

If the condition of the abbeys had appeared intolerable before investigation, still less could it be endured when the justice of the accusations against them had been ascertained. But the church was unequal to the work of self-reformation. Parliament alone could decide on the measures which the emergency made necessary; and preparatory to legislation, the true circumstances and present character of the religious bodies throughout the whole country were to be ascertained accurately and completely.

Accordingly, in the summer of 1535, directly after Sir Thomas More's execution, Cromwell, now "vicegerent of the king in all his ecclesiastical jurisdiction within the realm,"² issued a commission for a general visitation of the religious houses, the universities, and other spiritual corporations. The persons appointed to conduct the inquiry were Doctors Legh, Leyton, and Ap Rice, ecclesiastical lawyers in holy orders, with various subordinates. Legh and Leyton, the two principal commissioners, were young, impetuous men, likely to execute their work rather thoroughly than delicately; but, to judge by the surviving evidence, they were as upright and plain-dealing as they were assuredly able and efficient. It is pretended by some writers that the inquiry was set on foot with a preconceived purpose of spoliation; that the duty of the visitors was rather to defame roundly than to report truly; and that the object of the commission was merely to justify an act of appropriation which had been already determined. The commission of Pope Innocent, with the previous inquiries, puts to silence so gratuitous a supposition; while it is certain that antecedent to the presentation of the report, an extensive measure of suppression was not so much as contemplated. The directions to the visitors,³ the injunctions which they were to carry with them to the various houses, the private letters to the superiors, which were written by the king and by Cromwell,⁴ show plainly that

¹ WARHAM's *Register*, M.S., Lambeth.

² See *Injunctions to the Clergy*: FOXE, vol. v. p. 165.

³ BURNET's *Collectanea*, p. 74.

⁴ STRYPE's *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol. i. Appendix, p. 214.

the first object was to reform and not to destroy; and it was only when reformation was found to be conclusively hopeless, that the harder alternative was resolved upon. The report itself is no longer extant. Bonner was directed by Queen Mary to destroy all discoverable copies of it, and his work was fatally well executed. We are able, however, to replace its contents to some extent, out of the despatches of the commissioners.

Their discretionary powers were unusually large, as appears from the first act with which the visitors commenced operations. On their own responsibility, they issued an inhibition against the bishops, forbidding them to exercise any portion of their jurisdiction while the visitation was in progress. The sees themselves were to be inspected; and they desired to make the ground clear before they moved. When the amazed bishops exclaimed against so unheard-of an innovation, Doctor Legh justified the order by saying, that it was well to compel the prelates to know and feel their new position; and in the fact of their suspension by a royal commission, to "agnize" the king as the source of episcopal authority.¹

Truly it was an altered world since the bishops sent in their answer to the complaints of the House of Commons. The visitors, in this haughty style, having established their powers, began work with the university of Oxford. Their time was short, for parliament was to meet early in the spring, when their report was to be submitted to it; and their business meanwhile was not only to observe and inquire, but any reforms which were plainly useful and good, they were themselves to execute. They had no time for hesitation, therefore; and they laid their hands to the task before them with a promptitude at which we can only wonder. The heads of houses, as may be supposed, saw little around them which was in need of reform. A few students of high genius and high purposes had been introduced into the university, as we have seen, by Wolsey; and these had been assiduously exiled or imprisoned. All suspected books had been hunted out. There had been fagot processions in High-street, and bonfires of New Testaments at Carfax. The daily chapels, we suppose, had gone forward as usual, and the drowsy lectures on the Schoolmen; while "towardly young men" who were venturing stealthily into the perilous heresy of Greek, were eyed askance by the authorities, and taught to tremble at their temerity. All this we might have looked for; and

¹ Legh to Cromwell, Sept. 24th: *STRYPE'S Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol. i. Appendix, p. 216.—*Cotton. MS. Cleopatra, E 4, fol. 225.*

among the authorities themselves, also, the world went forward in a very natural manner. There was comfortable living in the colleges; so comfortable, that many of the country clergy preferred Oxford and Cambridge to the monotony of their parishes, and took advantage of a clause in a late act of parliament, which recognised a residence at either of the universities as an excuse for absence from tedious duties. "Divers and many persons," it was found, "beneficed with cure of souls, and being not apt to study by reason of their age or otherwise, ne never intending before the making of the said act to travel in study, but rather minding their own ease and pleasure, colourably to defraud the same good statute, did daily and commonly resort to the said universities, where, under pretence of study, they continued and abode, living dissolutely; nothing profiting themselves in learning, but consumed the time in idleness and pastimes and insolent pleasures, giving occasion and evil example thereby to the young men and students within the universities, and occupying such rooms and commodities as were instituted for the maintenance and relief of poor scholars."¹ These persons were not driven away by the heads of houses as the Christian Brothers had been; they were welcomed rather as pleasant companions. In comfortable conservatism they had no tendencies to heresy, but only to a reasonable indulgence of their five bodily senses. Doubtless, therefore, the visitors found Oxford a pleasant place, and cruelly they marred the enjoyments of it. Like a sudden storm of rain, they dropt down into its quiet precincts. Heedless of rights of fellows and founders' bequests, of sleepy dignities and established indolences, they re-established long dormant lectures in the colleges. In a few little days (for so long only they remained) they poured new life into education. They founded fresh professorships—professorships of Polite Latin, Professorships of Philosophy, Divinity, Canon Law, Natural Sciences—above all of the dreaded Greek; confiscating funds to support them. For the old threadbare text-books, some real teaching was swiftly substituted. The idle residents were noted down, soon to be sent home by parliament to their benefices, under pain of being compelled, like all other students, to attend lectures, and, in their proper persons, "keep sophisms, problems, disputations, and all other exercises of learning."²

The discipline was not neglected: "we have enjoined the religious students,"³ Leyton wrote to Cromwell, "that none of

¹ 28 Hen. VIII. cap. 13.

² Ibid.

³ That is, the exhibitioners sent up to the university from the monasteries.

them, for no manner of cause, shall come within any tavern, inn, or alehouse, or any other house, whatsoever it be, within the town and suburbs. [Each offender] once so taken, to be sent home to his cloyster. Without doubt, this act is greatly lamented of all honest women of the town; and especially of their laundresses, that may not now once enter within the gates, much less within the chambers, whereunto they were right well accustomed. I doubt not, but for this thing, only the honest matrons will sue to you for redress."¹ These were sharp measures; we lose our breath at their rapidity and violence. The saddest vicissitude was that which befell the famous Duns—Duns Scotus, the greatest of the Schoolmen, the constructor of the *memoria technica* of ignorance, the ancient text-book of *a priori* knowledge, established for centuries the supreme despot in the Oxford lecture-rooms. "We have set Duns in Bocardo," says Leyton. He was thrown down from his high estate, and from being lord of the Oxford intellect, was "made the common servant of all men;" condemned by official sentence to the lowest degradation to which book can be submitted.² Some copies escaped this worst fate; but for changed uses thenceforward. The second occasion on which the visitors came to New College, they "found the great Quadrant Court full of the leaves of Duns, the wind blowing them into every corner; and one Mr. Greenfield, a gentleman of Buckinghamshire, gathering up part of the same book leaves, as he said, to make him sewers or blawnsheres, to keep the deer within his wood, thereby to have the better cry with his hounds."³

To such base uses all things return at last; dust unto dust, when the life has died out of them, and the living world needs their companionship no longer.

On leaving Oxford, the visitors spread over England, north, south, east, and west. We trace Legh in rapid progress through Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Lincoln, Yorkshire, and Northumberland; Leyton through Middlesex, Kent, Sussex, Hants, Somersetshire, and Devon. They appeared at monastery after monastery, with prompt, decisive questions; and if the truth was concealed, with expedients for discovering it, in which practice soon made them skilful. All but everywhere the result was the same. At intervals a light breaks through, and

¹ STRYPE, *Memorials*, vol. i. p. 323. Leyton to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 71, et seq.

² Id quod meis oculis vidi, Leyton writes: *Ibid.*

³ Leyton to Cromwell: *Ib.*: p. 71, et seq.

symptoms appear of some efforts after decency; but in the vast majority of the smaller houses, the previous results were repeated, the popular suspicions were more than confirmed. Wolsey, when writing to the pope of his intended reformation, had spoken of the *animus improbus*, and the frightful symptoms which existed of it. He was accused, in his attempted impeachment, of having defamed the character of the English clergy. Yet Wolsey had written no more than the truth, as was too plainly discovered. I do not know what to say on this matter, or what to leave unsaid. If I am to relate the suppression of the monasteries, I should relate also why they were suppressed. If I were to tell the truth, I should have first to warn all modest eyes to close the book, and read no further. It will perhaps be sufficient if I introduce a few superficial stories, suggestive rather than illustrative of the dark matter which remains in the shade.

I have spoken more than once of the monastery of Sion. It was the scene of the Nun of Kent's intrigues. It furnished more than one martyr for the Catholic cause; and the order was Carthusian—one of the strictest in England. There were two houses attached to the same establishment—one of monks, another of nuns. The confessors of the women were chosen from the friars, and they were found to have abused their opportunities in the most infamous manner. With a hateful mixture of sensuality and superstition, the offence and the absolution went hand-in-hand. One of these confessors, so zealous for the pope that he professed himself ready to die for the Roman cause, was in the habit of using language so filthy to his penitents, that it was necessary to "sequester him from hearing ladies' confessions." The nuns petitioned the visitors, on the exposure of the seduction of a sister, that he and his companion might come to them no more; and the friar was told that his abominable conduct might be the occasion that "shrift should be laid down in England."¹

This is one instance of an evil found fatally prevalent.

Again, the clergy were suspected of obtaining dispensations from their superiors indulging them in a breach of their vows. The laxity of the church courts in dealing with clerical delinquents had perhaps given rise to this belief; but the accusation

¹ Leyton to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 48. Let it not be thought that the papal party were worse than the other. The second confessor, if anything the more profligate of the two, gave his services to the king.

was confirmed by a discovery at Maiden Bradley, in Wiltshire. The prior of this house had a family of illegitimate children, whom he brought up and provided for in a very comfortable manner;¹ and the visitor wrote that "*the pope, considering his fragility,*" had granted him a licence in this little matter; that he had, in fact, "*a good writing sub plumbo,* to discharge his conscience." I do not easily believe that *authentic* dispensations of such a kind were obtained from Rome, or were obtainable from it; but of forged dispensations, invented by reverend offenders or fraudulently issued by the local ecclesiastical authorities, to keep appearances smooth, there were probably enough, and too many.²

The more ordinary experiences of the commissioners may be described by Leyton himself, in an account which he wrote of his visit to Langden Abbey, near Dover. The style is graphic, and the picture of the scene one of the most complete which remains. The letter is to Cromwell.

"Please it your goodness to understand that on Friday, the 22nd of October, I rode back with speed to take an inventory of Folkstone, and from thence I went to Langden. Whereat immediately descending from my horse, I sent Bartlett, your servant, with all my servants, to circumspect the abbey, and surely to keep all back-doors and starting-holes. I myself went alone to the abbot's lodging, joining upon the fields and wood, even like a cony clapper, full of starting-holes. [I was] a good space knocking at the abbot's door; *nec vox nec sensus apparuit*, saving the abbot's little dog that within his door fast locked bayed and barked. I found a short poleaxe standing behind the door, and with it I dashed the abbot's door in pieces, *ictu oculi*, and set one of my men to keep that door; and about the house I go, with that poleaxe in my hand, *ne forte*, for the abbot is a dangerous desperate knave, and a hardy. But for a conclusion, his gentlewoman bestirred her stumps towards her starting-holes; and then Bartlett, watching the pursuit, took the tender damoisel; and, after I had examined her, [brought her] to Dover to the mayor, to set her in some cage or prison for

¹ The prior is an holy man, and hath but six children; and but one daughter married yet of the goods of the monastery. His sons be tall men, waiting upon him.—Leyton to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 58.

² I leave this passage as it stands. The acquittal of the papal courts of actual complicity becomes, however, increasingly difficult to me. I discovered among the MSS. in the Rolls House a list of eighteen clergy and laymen in one diocese who had, or professed to have, dispensations to keep concubines.—Note to Second Edition.

eight days; and I brought holy father abbot to Canterbury, and here in Christchurch I will leave him in prison. In this sudden doing *ex tempore*, to circumspect the house, and to search, your servant John Antony's men marvelled what fellow I was, and so did the rest of the abbey, for I was unknown there of all men. I found her apparel in the abbot's coffer. To tell you all this comedy (but for the abbot a tragedy), it were too long. Now it shall appear to gentlemen of this country, and other the commons, that ye shall not deprive or visit, but upon substantial grounds. The rest of all this knavery I shall defer till my coming unto you, which shall be with as much speed as I can possible." ¹

Towards the close of the year, Leyton went north to join Legh; and together they visited a nunnery at Lichfield. The religious orders were bound by oaths similar to those which have recently created difficulty in Oxford. They were sworn to divulge nothing which might prejudice the interests of the houses. The superior at Lichfield availed herself of this plea. When questioned as to the state of the convent, she and the sisterhood refused to allow that there was any disorder, or any irregularity, which could give occasion for inquiry. Her assertions were not implicitly credited; the inspection proceeded, and at length two of the sisters were discovered to be "not barren;" a priest in one instance having been the occasion of the misfortune, and a serving-man in the other. No confession could be obtained either from the offenders themselves, or from the society. The secret was betrayed by an "old beldame;" "and when," says Leyton, "I objected against the prioresses, that if they could not show me a cause reasonable of their concealment, I must needs, and would, punish them for their manifest perjury,—their answer was, that they were bound by their religion never to confess the secret faults done amongst them, but only to a visitor of their own religion, and to that they were sworn, every one of them, on their first admission." ²

A little later the commissioners were at Fountains Abbey; and tourists, who in their day-dreams among those fair ruins are inclined to complain of the sacrilege which wasted the houses of prayer, may study with advantage the following account of that house in the year which preceded its dissolution. The outward beautiful ruin was but the symbol and consequence of a moral ruin not so beautiful. "The Abbot of Fountains," we

¹ Leyton to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, pp. 75-6.

² *Ibid.* p. 91.

read in a joint letter of Legh and Leyton, had "greatly disappaid his house, [and] wasted the woods, notoriously keeping six women. [He is] defamed here," they say, "*a toto populo*, one day denying these articles, with many more, the next day confessing the same, thus manifestly incurring perjury." Six days before the visitors' access to his monastery "he committed theft and sacrilege, confessing the same. At midnight he caused his chaplain to seize the sexton's keys, and took out a jewel, a cross of gold with stones. One Warren, a goldsmith in the Chepe, was with him in his chamber at that hour, and there they stole out a great emerald, with a ruby. The said Warren made the abbot believe the ruby to be but a garnet, so that for this he paid nothing. For the emerald he paid but twenty pounds. He sold him also the plate without weight or ounces; how much the abbot was deceived therein he cannot tell, for he is a very fool and miserable idiot."¹

Under an impression that frauds of this description were becoming frequent, the government had instructed the commissioners to take inventories of the plate and jewels; and where they saw occasion for suspicion, to bring away whatever seemed superfluous, after leaving a supply sufficient for the services of the house and chapel. The misdemeanour of the Abbot of Fountains was not the only justification of these directions. Sometimes the plate was secreted. The Prior of Christ Church, Canterbury, was accused of having sent in a false return,² keeping back gold and precious stones valued at a thousand pounds. Information was given by some of the brethren, who professed to fear that the prior would poison them in revenge.

Occasionally the monks ventured on rougher methods to defend themselves. Here is a small spark of English life while the investigation was in progress, lighted by a stray letter from an English gentleman of Cheshire. The lord chancellor was informed by Sir Piers Dutton, justice of the peace, that the visitors had been at Norton Abbey. They had concluded their inspection, had packed up such jewels and plate as they purposed to remove, and were going away; when, the day being late and the weather foul, they changed their minds, and resolved to spend the night where they were. In the evening, "the abbot," says Sir Piers, "gathered together a great company, to the number of two or three hundred persons, so that the commis-

¹ Leyton and Legh to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 100.

² Christopher Levyns to Cromwell: *Ibid.* p. 96. But in this instance I doubt the truth of the charge.

sioners were in fear of their lives, and were fain to take a tower there; and therefrom sent a letter unto me, ascertaining me what danger they were in, and desiring me to come and assist them, or they were never likely to come thence. Which letter came to me about nine of the clock, and about two o'clock on the same night I came thither with such of my tenants as I had near about me, and found divers fires made, as well within the gates as without; and the said abbot had caused an ox to be killed, with other victuals, and prepared for such of his company as he had there. I used some policy, and came suddenly upon them. Some of them took to the pools and water, and it was so dark that I could not find them. Howbeit I took the abbot and three of his canons, and brought them to the king's castle of Hatton."¹

If, however, the appropriation of the jewels led to occasional resistance, another duty which the commissioners were to discharge, secured them as often a warm and eager welcome. It was believed that the monastic institutions had furnished an opportunity, in many quarters, for the disposal of inconvenient members of families. Children of both sexes, it was thought, had been forced into the abbeys and convents, at an age too young to have allowed them a free choice in the sacrifice of their lives. To all such, therefore, the doors of their prison house were thrown open. On the day of visitation, when the brethren, or the sisterhood, were assembled, the visitors informed everywhere such monks as were under twenty-four, and such nuns as were under twenty-one, that they might go where they pleased. To those among them who preferred to return to the world, a secular dress was given, and forty shillings in money, and they were restored to the full privileges of the laity.

The opportunity so justly offered was passionately embraced. It was attended only with this misfortune, that the line was arbitrarily drawn, and many poor wretches who found themselves condemned by the accident of a few more days or months of life to perpetual imprisonment, made piteous entreaties for an extension of the terms of freedom. At Fordham, in Cambridgeshire, Dr. Legh wrote to Cromwell, "the religious persons kneeling on their knees, instantly with humble petition desire of God and the king and you, to be dismissed from their religion, saying they live in it contrary to God's law and their consciences; trusting that the king, of his gracious goodness,

¹ Sir Piers Dutton to the Lord Chancellor: ELLIS, third series, vol. iii. p. 42.

and you, will set them at liberty out of their bondage, which they are not able to endure, but should fall into desperation, or else run away." "It were a deed of charity," he continued, fresh from the scene where he had witnessed the full misery of their condition, "that they might live in that kind of living which might be most to the glory of God, the quietness of their consciences, and most to the commonwealth, *whosoever hath informed you to the contrary.*"¹ Similar expressions of sympathy are frequent in the visitors' letters. Sometimes the poor monks sued directly to the vicar-general, and Cromwell must have received many petitions as strange, as helpless, and as graphic, as this which follows. The writer was a certain Brother Beerley, a Benedictine monk of Pershore, in Worcestershire. It is amusing to find him addressing the vicar-general as his "most reverend lord in God." I preserve the spelling, which, however, will with some difficulty be found intelligible.

"We do nothing seyrch," says this good brother, "for the doctryn of Chryst, but all fowloys owr owne sensyaly and plesure. Also most gracyus Lord, there is a secrett thyng in my conchons whych doth move mee to go owt of the relygyon, an yt were never so perfytt, whych no man may know but my gostly fader; the wych I supposs yf a man mothe guge [is] yn other yong persons as in me selfe. But Chryst saye *nolite judicare et non judicabimini*, therefore y wyll guge my nowne conschons fyrst—the wych fault ye shall know of me heyrafter more largyously—and many other fowll vycys done amonckst relygyus men—not relygyus men, as y thynck they owt not to be cald, but dyssemblars wyth God.

"Now, most gracyus Lord and most worthyst vycytar that ever cam amonckes us, help me owt of thys vayne relygyon, and macke me your servant handmayd and beydman, and save my sowlle, wych shold be lost yf ye helpe yt not—the wych ye may save wyth one word speking—and mayck me wych am nowe nawtt to cum unto grace and goodness.

"Now y wyll ynstrux your Grace sumwatt of relygyus men, and how the Kyng's Gracis commandment is keyp yn puttyng forth of bockys the Beyschatt of Rome's userpt pour. Monckes drynke an bowll after collatyon tyll ten or twelve of the klok, and cum to matyns as dronck as myss—and sum at cardys, sum at dycys, and at tabulles; sum cum to mattyns begenyng at the

¹ Legh to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 82. The last words are curious, as implying that Cromwell, who is always supposed to have urged upon the king the dissolution of the abbeyes and the marriage of the clergy, at this time inclined the other way.

mydes, and sum wen yt ys almost dun, and wold not cum there
 so only for boddly punysshment, nothyng for Goddis sayck:
 Also abbettes, monckes, prests, dun lyttyl or nothyng to put
 owtte of bockys the Beyschatt of Rome's name—for y myself
 do know yn dyvers bockys where ys name ys, and hys userpt
 powor upon us." ¹

In reply to these and similar evidences to the state of the
 monasteries, it will be easy to say, that in the best ages there
 were monks impatient of their vows, and abbots negligent of
 their duties; that human weakness and human wickedness may
 throw a stain over the noblest institutions; that nothing is
 proved by collecting instances which may be merely exceptions;
 and that no evidence is more fallacious than that which rests
 upon isolated facts.

It is true; and the difficulty is felt as keenly by the accuser
 who brings forward charges which it is discreditable to have
 urged, if they cannot be substantiated, as by those who would
 avail themselves of the easy opening to evade the weight of the
 indictment. I have to say only, that if the extracts which I
 have made lead persons disposed to differ with me to examine
 the documents which are extant upon the subject, they will
 learn what I have concealed as well as what I have alleged;
 and I believe that, if they begin the inquiry (as I began it
 myself) with believing that the religious orders had been over-
 hardly judged, they will close it with but one desire—that the
 subject shall never more be mentioned.

Leaving, then, the moral condition in which the visitors
 found these houses, we will now turn to the regulations which
 they were directed to enforce for the future. When the investi-
 gation at each of the houses had been completed, when the
 young monks and nuns had been dismissed, the accounts audited,
 the property examined, and the necessary inquiries had been
 made into the manners and habits of the establishment; the
 remaining fraternity were then assembled in the chapter-house,
 and the commissioners delivered to them their closing direc-
 tions. No differences were made between the orders. The same
 language was used everywhere. The statute of supremacy was
 first touched upon; and the injunction was repeated for the
 detailed observance of it. Certain broad rules of moral obedience
 were then laid down, to which all "religious" men without
 exception, were expected to submit.²

¹ Richard Bearley to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 132.

² These rules must be remembered. The impossibility of enforcing

No monks, thenceforward, were to leave the precincts of the monastery to which they belonged, under any pretext; they were to confine themselves within the walls, to the house, the gardens, and the grounds.

No women were to come within the walls, without licence from the king or the visitor; and, to prevent all unpermitted ingress or egress, private doors and posterns were to be walled up. There was, in future, to be but one entrance only, by the great foregate; and this was to be diligently watched by a porter. The "brethren" were to take their meals decently in the common hall. They were not to clamour, as they had been in the habit of doing, "for any certain, usual, or accustomed portion of meat;" but were to be content with what was set before them, giving thanks to God.

To ensure gravity and decency, one of the brethren, at every refectory, was to read aloud a chapter of the Old or New Testament.

The abbot was "to keep an honest and hospitable table;" and an almoner was to be appointed in each house, to collect the broken meats, and to distribute them among the deserving poor.

Special care was to be taken in this last article, and "*by no means should such alms be given to valiant, mighty, and idle beggars and vagabonds, such as commonly use to resort to such places; which rather as drove beasts and mychers should be driven away and compelled to labour, than in their idleness and lewdness be cherished and maintained, to the great hindrance and damage of the commonweal.*"

All other alms and distributions, either prescribed by the statutes of the foundations, or established by the customs of the abbays, were to be made and given as largely as at any past time.

The abbots were to make no waste of the woods or lands. They were to keep their accounts with an annual audit, faithfully and truly.

No fairs nor markets were any more to be held within the precincts.¹

Every monk was to have a separate bed, and not to have any child or boy lying with him, or otherwise haunting unto him.

obedience to them was the cause of the ultimate resolution to break up the system.

¹ At one time fairs and markets were held in churchyards.—Stat. Wynton 13 Ed. I. cap. 6.

The "brethren" were to occupy themselves in daily reading or other honest and laudable exercises. Especially there was to be every day one general lesson in Holy Scripture, at which every member of the house was bound to be present.

Finally, that they might all understand the meaning of their position in the world, and the intention, which they had so miserably forgotten, of the foundations to which they belonged, the abbot, prior, or president, was every day to explain in English some portion of the rule which they had professed; "applying the same always to the doctrine of Christ." The language of the injunctions is either Cromwell's or the king's; and the passage upon this subject is exceedingly beautiful.

"The abbot shall teach them that the said rule, and other their principles of religion (so far as they be laudable), be taken out of Holy Scripture: and he shall shew them the places from whence they be derived: and that their ceremonies and other observances be none other things than as the first letters or principles, and certain introductions to true Christianity: and that true religion is not contained in apparel, manner of going, shaven heads, and such other marks; nor in silence, fasting, uprising in the night, singing, and such other kind of ceremonies; but in cleanness of mind, pureness of living, Christ's faith not feigned, and brotherly charity, and true honouring of God in spirit and verity: and that those abovesaid things were instituted and begun, that they being first exercised in these, in process of time might ascend to those as by certain steps—that is to say, to the chief point and end of religion. And therefore, let them be exhorted that they do not continually stick and surcease in such ceremonies and observances, as though they had perfectly fulfilled the chief and outmost of the whole of true religion; but that when they have once passed such things, they should endeavour themselves after higher things, and convert their minds from such external matters to more inward and deeper considerations, as the law of God and Christian religion doth teach and shew: and that they assure not themselves of any reward or commodity by reason of such ceremonies and observances, except they refer all such to Christ, and for his sake observe them."¹

Certainly, no government which intended to make the irregularities of an institution an excuse for destroying it, ever

¹ General Injunctions to be given on the King's Highness's behalf, in all Monasteries and other houses of whatsoever order or religion they be: *BURNET'S Collectanea*, p. 77.

laboured more assiduously to defeat its own objects. Those who most warmly disapprove of the treatment of the monasteries, have so far no reason to complain; and except in the one point of the papal supremacy, under which, be it remembered, the religious orders had luxuriated in corruption, Becket or Hildebrand would scarcely have done less or more than what had as yet been attempted by Henry.

But the time had now arrived when the results of the investigation were to be submitted to the nation. The parliament—the same old parliament of 1529, which had commenced the struggle with the bishops—was now meeting for its last session, to deal with this its greatest and concluding difficulty. It assembled on the 4th of February, and the preliminaries of the great question being not yet completed, the Houses were first occupied with simplifying justice and abolishing the obsolete privileges of the Northern palatinates.¹ Other minor matters were also disposed of. Certain questionable people, who were taking advantage of the confusion of the times to “withhold tythes,” were animadverted upon.² The treason law was further extended to comprehend the forging of the king’s sign-manual, signet, and privy seal, “divers light and evil-disposed persons having of late had the courage to commit such offences.” The scale of fees at the courts of law was fixed by statute;³ and felons having protection of sanctuary were no longer to be permitted to leave the precincts, and return at their pleasure. When they went abroad, they were to wear badges, declaring who and what they were; and they were to be within bounds after sunset. In these and similar regulations the early weeks of the session were consumed. At length the visitors had finished their work, and the famous *Black Book* of the monasteries was laid on the table of the House of Commons.

This book, I have said, unhappily no longer exists. Persons however who read it have left on record emphatic descriptions of its contents; and the preamble of the act of parliament of which it formed the foundation, dwells upon its character with much distinctness. I cannot discuss the insoluble question whether the stories which it contained were true. History is ill occupied with discussing probabilities on *a priori* grounds, when the scale of likelihood is graduated by antecedent prejudice. It is enough that the report was drawn up by men who had the means of knowing the truth, and who were apparently

¹ 27-8 Hen. VIII. cap. 24.

² Ibid. cap. 20.

³ Ibid. cap. 9.

under no temptation to misrepresent what they had seen; that the description coincides with the authentic letters of the visitors; and that the account was generally accepted as true by the English parliament.

It appeared, then, on this authority, that two-thirds of the monks in England were living in habits which may not be described. The facts were related in great detail. The confessions of parties implicated were produced, signed by their own hands.¹ The vows were not observed. The lands were wasted, sold, and mortgaged. The foundations were incomplete. The houses were falling to waste; within and without, the monastic system was in ruins. In the smaller abbeys especially, where, from the limitation of numbers, the members were able to connive securely at each other's misdemeanours, they were saturated with profligacy, with Simony, with drunkenness.² The case against the monasteries was complete; and there is no occasion either to be surprised or peculiarly horrified at the discovery. The demoralisation which was exposed was nothing less and nothing more than the condition into which men of average nature compelled to celibacy, and living as the exponents of a system which they disbelieved, were certain to fall.

There were exceptions. In the great monasteries, or in many of them, there was decency and honourable management; but when all the establishments, large and small, had been examined, a third only could claim to be exempted from the darkest schedule. This was the burden of the report which was submitted to the legislature. So long as the extent of the evil was unknown, it could be tolerated; when it had been exposed to the world, honour and justice alike required a stronger remedy than an archiepiscopal remonstrance. A "great debate" followed.³ The journals of the session are lost, and we cannot replace the various arguments; but there was not a member of either House who was not connected, either by personal interest, or by sacred associations, with one or other of the religious houses; there was not one whose own experience could not test in some degree the accuracy of the *Black Book*; and there was no disposition to trifle with institutions which were the cherished dependencies of the great English families.

¹ STRYPE's *Memorials*, vol. i. p. 387; *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 114.

² When their enormities were first read in the parliament house, they were so great and abominable that there was nothing but "Down with them!"—LATIMER's *Sermons*, p. 123.

³ 27 Hen. VIII. cap. 28.

The instincts of conservatism, association, sympathy, respect for ancient bequests, and a sense of the sacredness of property set apart for holy uses, and guarded by anathemas, all must have been against a dissolution; yet, so far as we can supply the loss of the journals from other accounts of the feeling of the time, there seems to have been neither hope nor desire of preserving the old system—of preserving the houses, that is, collectively under their existing statutes as foundations in themselves inviolate. The visitation had been commenced with a hope that extremities might still be avoided. But all expectations of this kind vanished before the fatal evidence which had been produced. The House of Commons had for a century and a half been familiar with the thought of suppression as a possible necessity. The time was come when, if not suppression, yet some analogous measure had become imperative. The smaller establishments, at least, could not and might not continue. Yet while, so far, there was general agreement, it was no easy matter to resolve upon a satisfactory remedy. The representatives of the founders considered that, if houses were suppressed which had been established out of estates which had belonged to their forefathers, those estates should revert to the heirs; or at least, that the heirs should recover them upon moderate terms.¹ In the Reforming party there was difference of opinion on the legality of secularising property which had been given to God. Latimer, and partially Cromwell, inherited the designs of Wolsey; instead of taking away from the church the lands of the abbeys, they were desirous of seeing those lands transferred to the high and true interest of religion. They wished to convert the houses into places of education, and to reform, wherever possible, the ecclesiastical bodies themselves.² This, too, was the dream, the “devout imagination,” as it was called,

¹ Many letters from country gentlemen to this effect are in the collection made by Sir Henry Ellis.

² Latimer at first even objected to monks leaving their profession. Speaking of racking Scripture, he says, “I myself have been one of them that hath racked it; and the text, ‘He that putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back,’ I have believed and expounded against religious persons that would forsake their order, and would go out of their cloyster.”—*Sermons*, p. 60. We find him entreating Cromwell to prevent the suppression of Great Malvern, and begging that it may be allowed to remain.—“Not in monkery, but any other ways as should seem good to the King’s Majesty, as to maintain teaching, preaching, study, with praying and good housekeeping.”—*Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 149. Late in his life, under Edw. VI. he alluded bitterly to the decay of education, and the misuse of the appropriated abbey lands.—*Sermons*, p. 291.

of Knox, in Scotland, as it has been since the dream of many other good men who have not rightly understood why the moment at which the church was washed clean from its stains, and came out fresh robed in the wedding-garment of purity, should have been chosen to strip it of its resources, and depose it from power and pre-eminence. Cranmer, on the other hand, less imaginative but more practical, was reluctant that clerical corporations should be continued under any pretext—even under the mild form of cathedral chapters. Cranmer desired to see the secular system of the church made as efficient as possible; the religious system, in its technical sense, he believed to have become a nursery of idleness, and believed that no measures of reform could restore the old tone to institutions which the world had outgrown.¹ In the present age it will perhaps he considered that Cranmer's sagacity was more right than Latimer's enthusiasm, however at the moment men's warmer instincts might seem to have pleaded for the latter. The subsequent history both of the Scotch and English church permits the belief that neither would have been benefited by the possession of larger wealth than was left to them. A purer doctrine has not corrected those careless and questionable habits in the management of property which were exposed by the visitors of 1535. Whether the cause of the phenomenon lies in an indifference to the things of the world, or in the more dubious palliation, that successive incumbents have only a life-interest in their incomes, the experience of three centuries has proved the singular unfitness of spiritual persons for the administration of secular trusts; and the friends of the establishment may be grateful that the judgment of the English laity ultimately guided them to this conclusion. They were influenced, it is likely, by a principle which they showed rather in their deeds than in their words. They would not recognise any longer the distinction on which the claims of the abbeyes were rested. Property given to God, it was urged, might not be again taken from God, but must remain for ever in his service. It was replied in substance that God's service was not divided, but one; that all duties honestly done were religious duties; that the

¹ "This is my consideration; for having experience, both in times past and also in our days, how the sect of prebendaries have not only spent their time in much idleness, and their substance in superfluous belly cheer, I think it not to be a convenient state or degree to be maintained and established: considering that commonly a prebendary is neither a learner nor teacher, but a good viander."—Cranmer to Cromwell, on the New Foundation at Canterbury: *BURNET's Collectanea*, p. 498.

person of the layman was as sacred as the person of the priest; and the liturgy of obedience as acceptable as the liturgy of words.

Yet if, in the end, men found their way clearly, they moved towards it with slow steps; and the first resolution at which they arrived, embodied partially the schemes of each of the honest reformers. In touching institutions with which the feelings of the nation were deeply connected, prudence and principle alike dictated caution. However bitterly the people might exclaim against the abbeys while they continued to stand, their faults, if they were destroyed, would soon be forgotten. Institutions which had been rooted in the country for so many centuries, retained a hold too deep to be torn away without wounding a thousand associations; and a reaction of regret would inevitably follow among men so conservative as the English, so possessed with the reverence for the old traditions of their fathers. This was to be considered; or rather the parliament, the crown, and the council felt as the people felt. Vast as the changes were which had been effected, there had been as yet no sweeping measures. At each successive step, Henry had never moved without reluctance. He hated anarchy; he hated change: in the true spirit of an Englishman, he never surrendered an institution or a doctrine till every means had been exhausted of retaining it, consistently with allegiance to truth. The larger monasteries, therefore, with many of the rest, had yet four years allowed them to demonstrate the hopelessness of their amendment, the impossibility of their renovation. The remainder were to reap the consequences of their iniquities; and the judicial sentence was pronounced at last in a spirit as rational as ever animated the English legislature.

“Forasmuch,” says the preamble of the Act of Dissolution, “as manifest sin, vicious, carnal, and abominable living, is daily used and committed among the little and small abbeys, priories, and other religious houses of monks, canons, and nuns, where the congregation of such religious persons is under the number of twelve, whereby the governors of such religious houses and their convents, spoil, consume, destroy, and utterly waste their churches, monasteries, principal houses, farms, and granges, to the high displeasure of Almighty God, the slander of true religion, and to the great infamy of the King’s Highness and of the realm, if redress should not be had thereof; and albeit that many continual visitations hath been heretofore had by the space of two hundred years and more, for an honest and charitable reformation of such unthrifty, carnal, and abominable living;

yet nevertheless, little or none amendment is hitherto had, but their vicious living shamelessly increaseth and augmenteth, and by a cursed custom is so rooted and infested, that a great multitude of the religious persons in such small houses do rather choose to rove abroad in apostacy than to conform them to the observation of true religion; so that without such small houses be utterly suppressed, and the religious persons therein committed to great and honourable monasteries of religion in this realm, where they may be compelled to live religiously for the reformation of their lives, there can be no reformation in this behalf: in consideration hereof the King's most royal Majesty, being supreme head on earth, under God, of the Church of England, daily finding and devising the increase, advancement, and exaltation of true doctrine and virtue in the said Church, to the only glory of God, and the total extirping and destruction of vice and sin; having knowledge that the premises be true, as well by accounts of his late visitation as by sundry credible informations; considering also that divers great monasteries of this realm, wherein, thanks be to God, religion is right well kept and observed, be destitute of such full number of religious persons as they ought and may keep; hath thought good that a plain declaration should be made of the premises, as well to the Lords Spiritual and Temporal as to other his loving subjects the Commons in this present parliament assembled. Whereupon, the said Lords and Commons, by a great deliberation, finally be resolved that it is and shall be much more to the pleasure of Almighty God, and for the honour of this His realm, that the possessions of such spiritual houses, now spent, and spoiled, and wasted for increase and maintenance of sin, should be converted to better uses; and the unthrifty religious persons so spending the same be compelled to reform their lives."¹

The parliament went on to declare, that the lands of all monasteries the incomes of which were less than two hundred pounds a-year, should be "given to the king."² The monks were either to be distributed in the great abbeys, "or to be dismissed with a permission," if they desired it, "to live honestly and virtuously abroad." "Some convenient charity" was to be allowed them for their living; and the chief head or governor was to have "such pension as should be commensurate with his

¹ 27 Hen. VIII. cap. 28.

² Either to be held under the Crown itself for purposes of State, or to be granted out as fiefs among the nobles and gentlemen of England, under such conditions as should secure the discharge of those duties which by the laws were attached to landed tenures.

degree or quality.”¹ All debts, whether of the houses or of the brothers individually, were to be carefully paid; and finally, one more clause was added, sufficient in itself to show the temper in which the suppression had been resolved upon. The visitors had reported a few of the smaller abbeys as free from stain. The king was empowered, at his discretion, to permit them to survive; and under this permission thirty-two houses were refounded *in perpetuam eleemosynam*.²

This is the history of the first suppression of the monasteries under Henry VIII. We regret the depravity by which it was occasioned; but the measure itself, in the absence of any preferable alternative, was bravely and wisely resolved. In the general imperfection of human things, no measure affecting the interests of large bodies of men was ever yet devised which has not pressed unequally, and is not in some respects open to objection. We can but choose the best among many doubtful courses, when we would be gladly spared, if we might be spared, from choosing at all.

In this great transaction, it is well to observe that the laity alone saw their way clearly. The majority of the bishops, writhing under the inhibitions, looked on in sullen acquiescence, submitting in a forced conformity, and believing, not without cause, that a tide which flowed so hotly would before long turn and ebb back again. Among the Reforming clergy there was neither union nor prudence; and the Protestants, in the sudden sunshine, were becoming unmanageable and extravagant. On the bench there were but four prelates who were on the moving side—Cranmer, Latimer, Shaxton, and Barlow³—and among these Cranmer only approved the policy of the government. Shaxton was an arrogant braggart, and Barlow a feeble enthusiast. Shaxton, who had flinched from the stake when Bilney was burnt, Shaxton, who subsequently relapsed under Mary, and became himself a Romanist persecutor, was now strutting in his new authority, and punishing, suspending, and inhibiting in behalf of Protestant doctrines which were not yet tolerated by the law.⁴ Barlow had been openly preaching that

¹ The monks generally were allowed from four to eight pounds a-year, being the income of an ordinary parish priest. The principals in many cases had from seventy to eighty pounds a-year.

² BURNET'S *Collect.*, p. 80.

³ In the autumn of 1535 Latimer had been made Bishop of Worcester; Shaxton of Salisbury, and Barlow of St. David's.

⁴ STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. i. Appendix, p. 222; BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 92.

purgatory was a delusion; that a layman might be a bishop; that where two or three, it might be, "cobblers or weavers," "were in company in the name of God, there was the church of God."¹ Such ill-judged precipitancy was of darker omen to the Reformation than papal excommunications or imperial menaces, and would soon be dearly paid for in fresh martyr-fires. Latimer, too, notwithstanding his clear perception and gallant heart, looked with bitterness on the confiscation of establishments which his mind had pictured to him as garrisoned with a Reforming army, as nurseries of apostles of the truth. Like most fiery-natured men, he was ill-pleased to see the stream flowing in a channel other than that which he had marked for it; and the state of his feeling, and the state of the English world, with all its confused imaginings, in these months, is described with some distinctness in a letter written by a London curate to the Mayor of Plymouth, on the 13th of March, 1535-6, while the bill for the suppression of the abbeys was in progress through parliament.

"Right Worshipful,—On the morrow after that Master Hawkins departed from hence, I, having nothing to do, as an idler went to Lambeth to the bishop's palace, to see what news; and I took a wherry at Paul's Wharf, wherein also was already a doctor named Crewkhorne, which was sent for to come to the Bishop of Canterbury. And he, before the three Bishops of Canterbury, Worcester, and Salisbury, confessed that he was rapt into heaven, where he saw the Trinity sitting in a pall or mantle or cope of blew colour; and from the middle upward they were three bodies, and from the middle downward were they closed all three into one body. And he spake with Our Lady, and she took him by the hand, and bade him serve her as he had done in time past; and bade him preach abroad that she would be honoured at Ipswich and Willesdon as she hath been in old times.

"On Tuesday in Ember week, the Bishop of Rochester² came to Crutched Friars, and inhibited a doctor and three or four more to hear confession; and so in Cardmaker and other places. Then the Bishop of London's apparitor came and railed on the other bishops, and said that he, nor no such as he, shall have jurisdiction within his Lord's precincts. Then was the Bishop of London sent for to make answer; but he was sick and might not come. On Friday, the clergy sat on it in Convocation House a long time, and left off till another day; and in the

¹ STYFFE'S *Memorials*, vol. i. Appendix, p. 273.

² John Hilsey.

meantime, all men that have taken loss or wrong at his hands, must bring in their bills, and shall have recompence.

"On Sunday last, the Bishop of Worcester preached at Paul's Cross, and he said that bishops, abbots, priors, parsons, canons, resident priests, and all, were strong thieves; yea, dukes, lords, and all. The king, quoth he, made a marvellous good act of parliament, that certain men should sow every of them two acres of hemp; but it were all too little, even if so much more, to hang the thieves that be in England. Bishops, abbots, with such others, should not have so many servants, nor so many dishes; but to go to their first foundation; and keep hospitality to feed the needy people—not jolly fellows, with golden chains and velvet gowns; ne let these not once come into houses of religion for repast. Let them call knave bishop, knave abbot, knave prior, yet feed none of them all, nor their horses, nor their dogs. Also, to eat flesh and white meat in Lent, so it be done without hurting weak consciences, and without sedition; and likewise on Fridays and all days.

"The Bishop of Canterbury saith that the King's Grace is at full point for friars and chauntry priests, that they shall away all, saving them that can preach. Then one said to the bishop, that they had good trust that they should serve forth their lifetimes; and he said they should serve it out at a cart, then, for any other service they should have by that."

The concluding paragraph of this letter is of still greater interest. It refers to the famous Vagrant Act, of which I have spoken in the first chapter of this work.¹

"On Saturday in the Ember week, the King's Grace came in among the burgesses of the parliament, and delivered them a bill, and bade them look upon it, and weigh it in conscience; for he would not, he said, have them pass either it or any other thing because his Grace giveth in the bill; but they to see if it be for the commonweal of his subjects, and have an eye thitherwards; and on Wednesday next he will be there again to hear their minds. There shall be a proviso made for the poor people. The gaols shall be rid; the faulty shall die; and the others shall be rid by proclamation or by jury, and shall be set at liberty, and pay no fees. Sturdy beggars and such prisoners as cannot be set at work, shall be set at work at the king's charge; some at Dover, and some at places where the water hath broken over the lands. Then, if they fall to idleness, the idler shall be had before a justice of the peace, and his fault written. If he be

¹ 27 Hen. VIII. cap. 25.

taken idle again in another place, he shall be known where his dwelling is; and so at the second mention he shall be burned in the hand; and if he fail the third time, he shall die for it."¹

The king, as it appeared, had now the means at his disposal to find work for the unemployed; and the lands bequeathed for the benefit of the poor were re-applied, under altered forms, to their real intention. The antithesis which we sometimes hear between the charity of the monasteries—which relieved poverty for the love of God—and the worldly harshness of a poor-law, will not endure inspection. The monasteries, which had been the support of "valiant beggary," had long before transferred to the nation the maintenance of the impotent and the deserving; and the resumption of an abused trust was no more than the natural consequence of their dishonesty. I have already discussed² the penal clauses of this act, and I need not enter again upon that much-questioned subject. Never, however, at any period, were the labouring classes in England more generously protected than in the reign of Henry VIII.; never did any government strain the power of legislation more resolutely in their favour; and, I suppose, they would not themselves object to the re-enactment of Henry's penalties against dishonesty, if they might have with them the shelter of Henry's laws.

The session was drawing to an end. At the close of it, the government gave one more proof of their goodwill toward any portion of the church establishment which showed signs of being alive. Duns Scotus being disposed of in Bocardo, the idle residents being driven away, or compelled to employ themselves, and the professors' lectures having recovered their energy, there were hopes of good from Oxford and Cambridge; and the king conceded for them what the pope had never conceded, when the power rested with the See of Rome; he remitted formally by statute the tenths and firstfruits, which the colleges had paid in common with all other church corporations. "His Majesty is conscious," says the act which was passed on this occasion,³ that the enforcing of the payment of firstfruits against the universities, "may prejudice learning, and cause the students to give their minds to other things, which might not be acceptable to God;" and "he has conceived such hearty love

¹ Letter of Thomas Dorset to the Mayor of Plymouth: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 36.

² Vol. i. chap. i.

³ 27 Hen. VIII. cap. 42.

and tender affection to the continuance of honest and virtuous living, and of the arts and sciences (wherewith it hath pleased Almighty God abundantly to endow his Highness), as that his Grace cannot compare the same to any law, constitution, or statute; nor tolerate any such ordinance, though the commodity and benefit thereof should never so much redound to his own profit or pleasure, if it may hinder the advancement and setting forth of the lively word of God, wherewith his people must be fed; or if it may imperil the knowledge of such other good letters as in Christian realms is expedient to be learned. He has therefore,—(for that the students should the more gladly bend their wits to the attaining of learning, and, before all things, the learning of the wholesome doctrines of Almighty God, and the three tongues, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, which be requisite for the understanding of Scripture,)—thought it convenient "to exonerate the universities from the payment of firstfruits for ever.

So closed the first great parliament of the Reformation, which was now dissolved. The Lower House is known to us only as an abstraction. The debates are lost; and the details of its proceedings are visible only in faint transient gleams. We have an epitome of two sessions in the Lords' journals; but even this partial assistance fails us with the Commons; and the Lords in this matter were a body of secondary moment. The Lords had ceased to be the leaders of the English people; they existed as an ornament rather than a power; and under the direction of the council they followed as the stream drew them, when individually, if they had so dared, they would have chosen a far other course. The work was done by the Commons; by them the first move was made; by them and the king the campaign was carried through to victory. And this one body of men, dim as they now seem to us, who assembled on the wreck of the administration of Wolsey, had commenced and had concluded a revolution which had reversed the foundations of the State. They found England in dependency upon a foreign power; they left it a free nation. They found it under the despotism of a church establishment saturated with disease; and they had bound the hands of that establishment; they had laid it down under the knife, and carved away its putrid members; and stripping off its Nessus robe of splendour and power, they had awakened in it some forced remembrance of its higher calling.

The elements of a far deeper change were seething; a change, not

in the disposition of outward authority, but in the beliefs and convictions which touched the life of the soul. This was yet to come; and the work so far was but the initial step or prelude leading up to the more solemn struggle. Yet where the enemy who is to be conquered is strong, not in vital force, but in the prestige of authority, and in the enchanted defences of superstition, those truly win the battle who strike the first blow, who deprive the idol of its terrors by daring to defy it.

CHAPTER XI

TRIAL AND DEATH OF ANNE BOLEYNE

THE first act of the great drama appeared to have closed. No further changes were for the present in contemplation. The church was re-established under its altered constitution; and the parliament had been dissolved under the impression that it would be unnecessary to summon another for an indefinite time.¹ Within four weeks of the dissolution, writs were issued for a fresh election, under the pressure of a misfortune which is alike calamitous, under whatever aspect we regard it; and which blotted the Reformation with a black and frightful stain. The guilt must rest where it is due; but under any hypothesis, guilt there was, dark, mysterious, and most miserable.

The fate of Queen Catherine had by this time completed itself. She had taken her leave of a world which she had small cause to thank for the entertainment which it had provided for her; and she died, as she had lived, resolute, haughty, and unbending. In the preceding October (1535), she was in bad health; her house, she imagined, disagreed with her, and at her own desire she was removed to Kimbolton. But there were no symptoms of immediate danger. She revived under the change, and was in better spirits than she had shown for many previous months, especially after she heard of the new pope's resolution to maintain her cause. "Much resort of people came daily to her."² The vexatious dispute upon her title had been dropped, from an inability to press it; and it seemed as if life had become at least endurable to her, if it never could be more. But the repose was but the stillness of evening as night is hastening down. The royal officers of the household were not admitted into her presence; the queen lived wholly among her own friends and her own people; she sank unperceived; and so effectually had she withdrawn from the observation of those whom she desired to exclude, that the king was left to learn from the Spanish ambassador that she was at the point of death, before

¹ Speech of the Lord Chancellor: *Lords' Journals*, p. 84.

² STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. i. p. 376.

her chamberlain was aware that she was more than disposed.¹ In the last week of December Henry learnt that she was in danger. On the 2nd of January the ambassador went down from London to Kimbolton, and spent the day with her.² On the 5th Sir Edmund Bedingfield wrote that she was very ill, and that the issue was doubtful. On the morning of the 7th she received the last sacrament, and at two o'clock on that day she died.³ On her deathbed she dictated the following letter of farewell to him whom she still called, her most dear lord and husband.

"The hour of my death now approaching, I cannot choose but, out of the love I bear you, advise you of your soul's health, which you ought to prefer before all considerations of the world or flesh whatsoever; for which yet you have cast me into many calamities, and yourself into many troubles. But I forgive you all, and pray God to do so likewise. For the rest I commend unto you Mary our daughter, beseeching you to be a good father to her, as I have heretofore desired. I must entreat you also to respect my maids, and give them in marriage, which is not much, they being but three; and to all my other servants a year's pay besides their due, lest otherwise they should be unprovided for. Lastly, I make this vow, that mine eyes desire you above all things. Farewell."⁴

This letter reached Henry with the intimation that she was gone. He was much affected, and is said to have shed tears.⁵

The court was ordered into mourning—a command which Anne Boleyn distinguished herself by imperfectly obeying.⁶ Catherine was buried at Peterborough, with the estate of Prin-

¹ Sir Edmund Bedingfield to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 451.

² STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. i. and see Appendix, p. 241, et seq.

³ *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 452.

⁴ LORD HERBERT, p. 188.

⁵ LORD HERBERT, p. 188. It will have been observed, that neither in this letter, nor in the other authentic papers connected with her death, is there any allusion to Cardinal Pole's famous story, that being on her death-bed, Queen Catherine prayed the king to allow her to see her daughter for the last time, and that the request was refused. Pole was not in England at the time. He drew his information from Catholic rumour, as vindictive as it was credulous; and in the many letters from members of the privy council to him which we possess, his narrative is treated as throughout a mere wild collection of fables. I require some better evidence to persuade me that this story is any truer than the rest, when we know that Catherine allowed the king to hear that she was dying, not from herself, but from a foreign ambassador; and that such a request could have been made in the few days which intervened between this intimation and her death, without some traces of it appearing in the close account which we possess of her language and actions during those days, is in a high degree unlikely.

⁶ See LINGARD, vol. v. p. 39. HALL says—"Queen Anne wore yellow for mourning."

cess Royal;¹ and shortly after, on the foundation of the new bishoprics, the See of Peterborough was established in her memory. We may welcome, however late, these acts of tardy respect.² Henry, in the few last years, had grown wiser in the ways of women; and had learnt to prize more deeply the austerity of virtue, even in its unloveliest aspect.

The death of Catherine was followed, four months later, by the tragedy which I have now to relate. The ground on which I am about to tread is so critical, and the issues at stake affect so deeply the honour of many of our most eminent English statesmen, that I must be pardoned if I cannot step boldly out with a flowing narrative, but must pick my way slowly as I can: and I, on my part, must ask my readers to move slowly also, and be content to allow their judgment, for a few pages, to remain in suspense.

And first, I have to say that, as with all the great events of Henry's reign, so especially with this, we must trust to no evidence which is not strictly contemporary. During periods of revolution, years do the work of centuries in colouring actions and disturbing forms; and events are transferred swiftly from the deliberation of the judgment to the precipitate arrogance of party spirit. When the great powers of Europe were united against Elizabeth, and when Elizabeth's own character was vilely and wantonly assailed, the Catholic writers dipped their pens in the stains which blotted her mother's name; and, more careless of truth than even theological passion can excuse, they poured out over both alike a stream of indiscriminate calumny. On the other hand, as Elizabeth's lordly nature was the pride of

¹ The directions for the funeral are printed in LINGARD, vol. v. Appendix, p. 267.

² It ought not to be necessary to say that her will was respected—LORD HERBERT, p. 188; but the king's conduct to Catherine of Arragon has provoked suspicion even where suspicion is unjust; and much mistaken declamation has been wasted in connection with this matter upon an offence wholly imaginary.

In making her bequests, Catherine continued to regard herself as the king's wife, in which capacity she professed to have no power to dispose of her property. She left her legacies in the form of a petition to her husband. She had named no executors; and being in the eyes of the law "a sole woman," the administration lapsed in consequence to the nearest of kin, the emperor. Some embarrassment was thus created, and the attorney-general was obliged to evade the difficulty by a legal artifice, before the king could take possession, and give effect to the bequests.—See STRYPER'S *Memor.* vol. i. Appendix, pp. 252-5. Miss Strickland's valuable volumes are so generally read, that I venture to ask her to reconsider the passage which she has written on this subject. The king's offences against Catherine require no unnecessary exaggeration.

all true-hearted Englishmen, so the Reformers laboured to reflect her virtues backwards. Like the Catholics, they linked the daughter with the parent; and became no less extravagant in their panegyrics than their antagonists in their gratuitous invective. But the Anne Boleyn, as she appears in contemporary letters, is not the Anne Boleyn of Foxe, or Wyatt, or the other champions of Protestantism, who saw in her the counterpart of her child. These writers, though living so near to the events which they described, yet were divided from the preceding generation by an impassable gulf. They were surrounded with the heat and flame of a controversy, in which public and private questions were wrapped inseparably together; and the more closely we scrutinise their narratives, the graver occasion there appears for doing so.

While, therefore, in following out this miserable subject, I decline so much as to entertain the stories of Sanders, who has represented Queen Anne as steeped in profligacy from her childhood; so I may not any more accept those late memorials of her saintliness, which are alike unsupported by the evidence of those who knew her. If Protestant legends are admitted as of authority, the Catholic legends must enter with them, and we shall only deepen the confusion. I cannot follow Burnet, in reporting out of Meteren a version of Anne Boleyn's trial, unknown in England. The subject is one on which rhetoric and rumour are alike unprofitable. We must confine ourselves to accounts written at the time by persons to whom not the outline of the facts only was known, but the circumstances which surrounded them; by persons who had seen the evidence upon the alleged offences, which, though now lost irrecoverably, can be proved to have once existed.

We are unable, as I early observed, to form any trustworthy judgment of Anne Boleyn before her marriage. Her education had been in the worst school in Europe. On her return from the French court to England, we have seen her entangled in an unintelligible connection with Lord Percy; and if the account sent to the Emperor was true, she was Lord Percy's actual wife; and her conduct was so criminal as to make any after charges against her credible.¹

If the Protestants, again, found in her a friend and supporter, she was capable, as Wolsey experienced, of inveterate hatred; and although among the Reformers she had a reputation for

¹ See vol. i. p. 113.

generosity, which is widely confirmed,¹ yet it was exercised always in the direction in which her interests pointed; and kindness of feeling is not incompatible, happily, with seriously melancholy faults.

The strongest general evidence in her favour is that of Cranmer, who must have known her intimately, and who, at the crisis of her life, declared that he "never had better opinion in woman than he had in her."² Yet there had been circumstances in her conduct, as by her own after confessions was amply evident, which justified Sir Thomas More in foretelling a stormy end to her splendour;³ and her relations with the king, whether the fault rested with him, or rested with her, grew rapidly cool when she was his wife. In 1534, perhaps sooner, both she herself, her brother, and her relations had made themselves odious by their insolence; her overbearing manners had caused a decline in the king's affection for her; and on one side it was reported that he was likely to return to Catherine,⁴ on the other that he had transferred his attention to some other lady, and that the court encouraged his inconstancy to separate him from Anne's influence.⁵ D'Inteville confirms the account of a new love affair, particularising nothing, but saying merely that Anne was falling out of favour; and that the person alluded to as taking her place was Jane Seymour, appears from a letter written after Anne's execution, by the Regent Mary to the Emperor of Austria, and from the letter written (supposing it genuine) by Anne herself to the king before her trial.⁶

On the other hand, it is equally clear that whether provoked or not by infidelity on the part of Henry, her own conduct had been singularly questionable. We know very little, but waiving for the present the exposures at her trial, we know, by her own

¹ FOXE speaks very strongly on this point. In ELLIS's Letters we find many detailed instances, and indeed in all contemporary authorities.

² Cranmer's Letter to the King: BURNET, vol. i. p. 323.

³ MORE's *Life of More*, and see chap. ix.

⁴ Il Re de Inghilterra haveva fatto venire in la Corte sua il majordomo de la Regina et mostrava esserse mitigato alquanto. La causa della mitigation procede del buon negotiar ha fatto et fa la Catolica Mata. con lo Ambaxiatore del Re de Inghilterra con persuadirle con buoni paroli el pregeri che debbia restituir la Regina in la antigua dignita.

Dicano anchora che la Anna e mal voluta degli Si. di Inghilterra si per la sua superbia, si anche per l' insolentia et mali portementi che fanno nel regno li fratelli e parenti di Anna e che per questo il Re non la porta la affezione que soleva.—"Nuevas de Inglaterra:" MS. *Archives of Simancas*.

⁵ Il Re festeggia una altra donna della quale se mostra esser innamorato; e molti Si. di Inghilterra lo ajutano nel seguir el preditto amore per desviar questo Re de la pratica di Anna.—*Ibid.*

⁶ BURNET's *Collectanea*, p. 87.

confession, that arrogance and vanity had not been her only faults, and that she had permitted the gentlemen who were the supposed partners of her guilt, to speak to her of their passion for herself.¹

In January, 1535, Henry's mind had been filled with "doubts and strange suspicions" about his wife. There had been a misunderstanding, in which she had implored the intercession of Francis I.²

In February, 1536, she miscarried, with a dead boy, which later rumour dwelt on as the cause of Henry's displeasure. But conversations such as those which she described with her supposed paramours, lay bare far deeper wounds of domestic unhappiness; and assure us, that if we could look behind the scenes, we should see there estrangements, quarrels, jealousies, the thousand dreary incidents that, if we knew them, would break the suddenness with which at present the catastrophe bursts upon us. It is the want of preparation, the blank ignorance in which we are left of the daily life and daily occurrences of the court, which places us at such disadvantage for recovering the truth. We are unable to form any estimate whatever of these antecedent likelihoods which, in the events of our own ordinary lives, guide our judgment so imperceptibly, yet so surely. Henry is said to have been inconstant, but those who most suspected Henry's motives charge Anne at the same time with a long notorious profligacy.³ We cannot say what is probable or what is improbable; except, indeed, that the guilt of every person is improbable antecedent to evidence; and in the present instance, since, either on the side of the queen or of the king, there was and must have been most terrible guilt, these opposite presumptions neutralise each other.

To proceed with the story. Towards the middle of April, 1536, certain members of the privy council were engaged secretly in receiving evidence which implicated the queen in adultery. Nothing is known of the quarter from which the information came which led to the inquiry.⁴ Something, however, there was to call for inquiry, or something there was thought to be; and on the 24th of April the case was considered sufficiently

¹ *Pilgrim*, p. 117.

² *Le Laboureur*, i. 405: quoted in LINGARD, vol. v. p. 30.

³ Quoy qu'il en soit l'on me luy peult faire grand tort quand cires l'on a reputé pour meschante. Car ce a este des longtemps son stile.—The Regent Mary to Ferdinand: *MS. Brussels*.

⁴ Later writers point to the ladies of the court, but report could not agree upon any single person: and nothing is really known.

complete to make necessary a public trial. On that day an order was issued for a special commission. The members of the tribunal were selected with a care proportioned to the solemnity of the occasion.¹ It was composed of the lord chancellor, the first noblemen of the realm, and of the judges. The investigation had, however, been conducted so far with profound secrecy; and the object for which it was to assemble was unknown even to Cranmer, himself a member of the privy council.² With the same mysterious silence on the cause of so unexpected a measure, the writs were issued for a general election, and parliament was required to assemble as soon as possible.³ On Thursday, the 27th, the first arrest was made. Sir William Brereton,⁴ a gentleman of the king's household, was sent suddenly to the Tower; and on the Sunday after, Mark Smeton, of whom we know only that he was a musician high in favour at the court, apparently a spoilt favourite of royal bounty.⁵ The day following was the 1st of May. It was the day on which the annual festival was held at Greenwich, and the queen appeared as usual, with her husband and the court at the tournament. Lord Rochfort, the queen's brother, and Sir Henry Norris, both of them implicated in the fatal charge, were defender and challenger. The tilting had commenced, when the king rose suddenly with signs of disturbance in his manner, left the court, and rode off with a small company to London. Rumour, which delights in dramatic explanations of great occurrences, has discovered that a handkerchief dropped by the queen, and caught by Norris, roused Henry's jealousy; and that his after conduct was the result of a momentary anger. The incidents of the preceding week are a sufficient reply to this romantic story. The mine was already laid, the match was ready for the fire.

The king did not return: he passed the night in London, and Anne remained at Greenwich. On the morning of Tuesday

¹ BAGA DE SECRETIS, pouch 8: Appendix II. to the *Third Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records*.

² Cranmer to the King: BURNET, vol. i. p. 322.

³ I must draw particular attention to this. Parliament had been just dissolved, and a fresh body of untried men were called together for no other purpose than to take cognisance of the supposed discovery.—See the Speech of the Lord Chancellor: *Lords' Journals*, p. 84. If the accusations were intentionally forged by the king, to go out of the way to court so needless publicity was an act most strange and most incomprehensible.

⁴ Constantyne says, Smeton was arrested first on Saturday evening, at Stepney; but he seems inconsistent with himself. See his Memorial, *Archæologia*, vol. xxiii. p. 63.

⁵ His name repeatedly occurs in "the Privy Purse Expenses of Henry VIII."

the privy council assembled in the palace under the presidency of the Duke of Norfolk, and she was summoned to appear before it. The Duke of Norfolk, her uncle, was anxious, as Burnet insinuates, on political grounds that his niece should be made away with. Such accusations are easily brought, especially when unsupported by evidence. She was unpopular from her manner. The London merchants looked on her with no favour as having caused a breach in the alliance with Flanders, and the duke was an imperialist and at heart a friend of Queen Catherine; but he had grown old in the service of the state with an unblemished reputation; and he felt too keenly the disgrace which Anne's conduct had brought upon her family, to have contrived a scheme for her removal at once so awkward and so ignominious.¹ On her examination, she declared herself innocent; the details of what passed are unknown; only she told Sir William Kingston that she was cruelly handled at Greenwich with the king's council; "and that the Duke of Norfolk, in answer to her defence, had said, 'Tut, tut, tut,' shaking his head three or four times."² The other prisoners were then examined; not Brereton, it would seem, but Smeton, who must have been brought down from the Tower, and Sir Henry Norris, and Sir Francis Weston, two young courtiers, who had both of them been the trusted friends of the king. Each day the shadow was stretching further. The worst was yet to come.

On being first questioned, these three made general admissions, but denied resolutely that any actual offence had been committed. On being pressed further and cross-examined, Smeton confessed to actual adultery.³ Norris hesitated: being pressed, however, by Sir William Fitzwilliam to speak the truth, he also made a similar acknowledgment, although he afterwards withdrew from what he had said.⁴ Weston persisted in declaring

¹ Five years later, after the shameful behaviour of Catherine Howard, the duke wrote to the king of "*the abominable deeds done by two of my nieces against your Highness*;" which he said have "brought me into the greatest perplexity that ever poor wretch was in, fearing that your Majesty, having so often and by so many of my kyn been thus falsely and traitorously handled, might not only conceive a displeasure in your heart against me and all other of that kyn, but also in manner abhor to hear speak of any of the same."—Norfolk to Henry VIII.: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 721.

² Kingston to Cromwell: SINGER'S CAVENDISH, p. 456, et seq., in STRYFE'S *Memorials*, vol. i.

³ Sir Edward Baynton to the Lord Treasurer, from Greenwich: SINGER'S CAVENDISH, p. 458.

⁴ See LINGARD, vol. v. p. 33. It is not certain whether the examination of the prisoners was at Greenwich or at the Tower. Baynton's letter is dated from Greenwich, but that is not conclusive. CONSTANTYNE says (*Archæologia*, vol. xxiii. p. 63) that the king took Norris with him to London,

himself innocent. The result was unsatisfactory, and it was thought that it would "much touch the king's honour" if the guilt of the accused was not proved more clearly. "Only Mark," Sir Edward Baynton said, would confess "of any actual thing;"¹ although he had no doubt "the other two" were "as fully culpable as ever was he." They were, however, for the present, recommitted to the Tower; whither also in the afternoon the council conducted the queen, and left her in the custody of Sir William Kingston.

She was brought up the river; the same river along which she sailed in splendour only three short years before. She landed at the same Tower Stairs; and, as if to complete the bitter misery of the change, she was taken "to her own lodgings in which she lay at her coronation." She had feared that she was to go to a dungeon. When Kingston told her that these rooms had been prepared for her, "It is too good for me," she said, "Jesu have mercy on me;" "and kneeled down, weeping a great space; and in the same sorrow fell into a great laughing."² She then begged that she might have the sacrament in the closet by her chamber, that she might pray for mercy, declaring "that she was free from the company of man as for sin," and was "the king's true wedded wife."

She was aware that the other prisoners were in the Tower, or, at least, that Smeton, Weston, and Norris were there. Whether she knew at that time of the further dreadful accusation which was hanging over her, does not appear; but she asked anxiously for her brother; and, if she had suspected anything, her fears must have been confirmed by Kingston's evasive replies. It is so painful to dwell upon the words and actions of a poor woman in her moments of misery, that Kingston may describe his conversation with her in his own words. Lord Rochfort had returned to London at liberty; he seems to have been arrested the same Tuesday afternoon. "I pray you," she said, "to tell me where my Lord Rochfort is?" "I told her," Kingston wrote, that "I saw him afore dinner, in the court." "Oh, where is my sweet brother?" she went on. "I

and, as he heard say, urged him all the way to confess, with promises of pardon if he would be honest with him. Norris persisted in his denial, however, and was committed to the Tower. Afterwards, before the council, he confessed. On his trial his confession was read to him, and he said he was deceived into making it by Sir W. Fitzwilliam; an accusation against this gentleman very difficult to believe.

¹ Letter to the Lord Treasurer.

² Kingston to Cromwell: SINGER'S CAVENDISH, p. 451.

said I left him at York-place; and so I did. 'I hear say,' said she, 'that I should be accused with three men; and I can say no more but nay, without I should open my body,'—and therewith she opened her gown, saying, 'Oh, Norris, hast thou accused me? Thou art in the Tower with me, and thou and I shall die together. And, Mark, thou art here too. Oh, my mother, thou wilt die for sorrow.' And much she lamented my Lady of Worcester, for because her child did not stir in her body. And my wife said, 'What should be the cause?' She said, 'For the sorrow she took for me.' And then she said, 'Mr. Kingston, shall I die without justice?' And I said, 'The poorest subject the king hath, had justice;' and therewith she laughed."¹

Lady Boleyn, her aunt, had been sent for, with a Mrs. Cousins, and two other ladies, selected by the king.² They were ordered to attend upon the queen; but to observe a strict silence; and to hold no communication with her, except in the presence of Lady Kingston. This regulation, it was found, could not be insisted on. Lady Boleyn and Mrs. Cousins slept in the queen's room, and conversation could not be prevented: Mrs. Cousins undertook, on her part, to inform Kingston if anything was said which "it was meet that he should know."³

In compliance with this promise, she told him, the next morning, that the queen had been speaking to her about Norris. On the preceding Sunday, she said that Norris had offered to "swear for the queen, that she was a good woman." "But how," asked Mrs. Cousins, very naturally, "how came any such things to be spoken of at all?" "Marry," the queen said, "I bade him do so: for I asked him why he went not through with his marriage; and he made answer, that he would tarry a time. Then, I said, You look for dead men's shoes; for if aught came to the king but good, you would look to have me."⁴ And he said, if he should have any such thought, he would his head were off. And then she said she could undo him, if she would. And therewith they fell out." "But she said she more feared Weston; for on Whitsun Tuesday last, Weston told her

¹ Kingston to Cromwell: SINGER'S CAVENDISH, p. 451.

² She said, "I think it much unkindness in the king to put such about me as I never loved." I shewed her that the king took them to be honest and good women. "But I would have had of mine own privy chamber," she said, "which I favour most."—Kingston to Cromwell: *Ibid.* p. 457.

³ *Ibid.* p. 453.

⁴ The disorder of which the king ultimately died—ulceration in the legs—had already begun to show itself.

that Norris came more unto her chamber for her than for Mage.² Afterwards, "The queen spake of Weston, that she had spoken to him, because he did love her kinswoman, Mrs. Skelton, and that she said he loved not his wife; and he made answer to her again, that he loved one in her house better than them both. She asked him who is that? to which he answered, that it is yourself. 'And then,' she said, 'she defied him.'"²

So passed Wednesday at the Tower. Let us feel our very utmost commiseration for this unhappy woman; if she was guilty, it is the more reason that we should pity her; but I am obliged to say, that conversations of this kind, admitted by herself, disentitle her to plead her character in answer to the charges against her. Young men do not speak of love to young and beautiful married women, still less to ladies of so high rank, unless something more than levity has encouraged them; and although to have permitted such language is no proof of guilt, yet it is a proof of the absence of innocence.

Meanwhile, on the Tuesday morning, a rumour of the queen's arrest was rife in London; and the news for the first time reached the ears of Cranmer. The archbishop was absent from home, but in the course of the day he received an order, through Cromwell, to repair to his palace, and remain there till he heard further. With what thoughts he obeyed this command may be gathered from the letter which, on the following morning, he wrote to Henry. The fortunes of the Reformation had been so closely linked to those of the queen, that he trembled for the consequences to the church of the king's too just indignation. If the barren womb of Catherine had seemed a judgment against the first marriage, the shameful issue of the second might be regarded too probably as a witness against that and against

¹ The lady, perhaps, to whom Norris was to have been married. Sir Edward Baynton makes an allusion to a Mistress Margery. The passage is so injured as to be almost unintelligible:—"I have mused much et . . . of Mistress Margery, which hath used her . . . strangely towards me of late, being her friend as I have been. But no doubt it cannot be but she must be of counsell therewith. There hath been great friendship between the queen and her of late."—Sir E. Baynton to the Lord Treasurer: SINGER, p. 458.

² Kingston to Cromwell: SINGER, pp. 452-3. Of Smeton she said—"He was never in my chamber but at Winchester;" she had sent for him "to play on the virginals," for there her lodging was above the king's. . . . "I never spoke with him since," she added, "but upon Saturday before May day, and then I found him standing in the round window in my chamber of presence, and I asked why he was so sad, and he answered and said it was no matter"; and then she said, "You may not look to have me speak to you as I should to a nobleman, because you be an inferior person." "No, no, madam; a look sufficeth me [he said], and thus fare you well."—Ibid. p. 455.

every act which had been connected with it. Full of these forebodings, yet not too wholly occupied with them to forget the unhappy queen, he addressed the king, early on Wednesday, in the following language:—

“ Please it your most noble Grace to be advertised, that at your Grace’s commandment, by Mr. Secretary’s letter, written in your Grace’s name, I came to Lambeth yesterday, and there I do remain to know your Grace’s further pleasure. And forasmuch as without your Grace’s commandment, I dare not, contrary to the contents of the said letter, presume to come unto your Grace’s presence; nevertheless, of my most bounden duty, I can do no less than most humbly to desire your Grace, by your great wisdom, and by the assistance of God’s help, somewhat to suppress the deep sorrows of your Grace’s heart, and to take all adversities of God’s hands both patiently and thankfully. I cannot deny but your Grace hath good cause many ways of lamentable heaviness; and also, that in the wrongful estimation of the world, your Grace’s honour of every part is so highly touched (whether the things that commonly be spoken of be true of not), that I remember not that ever Almighty God sent unto your Grace any like occasion to try your Grace’s constancy throughout, whether your Highness can be content to take of God’s hands as well things displeasing as pleasant. And if He find in your most noble heart such an obedience unto his will, that your Grace, without murmuration and over-much heaviness, do accept all adversities, not less thanking Him than when all things succeed after your Grace’s will and pleasure, then I suppose your Grace did never thing more acceptable unto Him since your first governance of this your realm. And moreover, your Grace shall give unto Him occasion to multiply and increase his graces and benefits unto your Highness, as He did unto his most faithful servant Job; unto whom, after his great calamities and heaviness, for his obedient heart, and willing acceptation of God’s scourge and rod, addidit Dominus cuncta duplicia. And if it be true that is openly reported of the Queen’s Grace, if men had a right estimation of things, they should not esteem any part of your Grace’s honour to be touched thereby; but her honour to be clean disparaged. And I am in such perplexity, that my mind is clean amazed; for I never had better opinion in woman than I had in her; which maketh me to think that she should not be culpable. And again, I think your Highness would not have gone so far, except she had been surely culpable.

"Now I think that your Grace best knoweth that, next unto your Grace, I was most bound unto her of all creatures living. Wherefore, I most humbly beseech your Grace to suffer me in that which both God's law, nature, and also her kindness bindeth me unto: that is, that I may with your Grace's favour wish and pray for her that she may declare herself inculpable and innocent. And if she be found culpable, considering your Grace's goodness to her, and from what condition your Grace of your only mere goodness took her, and set the crown upon her head, I repute him not your Grace's faithful servant and subject, nor true unto the realm, that would not desire the offence without mercy to be punished, to the example of all other. And as I loved her not a little for the love which I judged her to bear towards God and his gospel; so if she be proved culpable, there is not one that loveth God and his gospel that will ever favour her, but must hate her above all other; and the more they favour the gospel, the more they will hate her; for there never was creature in our time that so much slandered the gospel. And God hath sent her this punishment for that she feignedly hath professed his gospel in her mouth, and not in heart and deed. And though she hath offended so that she hath deserved never to be reconciled to your Grace's favour, yet Almighty God hath manifoldly declared his goodness towards your Grace, and never offended you. But your Grace, I am sure, acknowledgeth that you have offended Him. Wherefore, I trust that your Grace will bear no less entire favour unto the truth of the gospel than you did before; forasmuch as your Grace's favour to the gospel was not led by affection unto her, but by zeal unto the truth. And thus I beseech Almighty God, whose gospel he hath ordained your Grace to be defender of, ever to preserve your Grace from all evil, and give you at the end the promise of his gospel. From Lambeth, the third of May."

The letter was written; it was not, however, sent upon the instant; and in the course of the morning the archbishop was requested to meet the Lord Chancellor, Lord Oxford, Lord Sussex, and the Lord Chamberlain, in the Star Chamber. He went, and on his return to Lambeth he added a few words in a postscript. In the interview from which he had at the moment returned, those noblemen, he said, had declared unto him such things as his Grace's pleasure was they should make him privy unto; for the which he was most bounden unto his Grace. "What communications we had together," he added, "I doubt not but they will make the true report thereof unto your Grace.

*I am exceedingly sorry that such faults can be proved by the queen, as I heard of their relation."*¹

If we may believe, as I suppose we may, that Cranmer was a man of sound understanding, and of not less than ordinary probity, this letter is of the greatest value; it shows the impression which was made upon a sensible person by the first rumours of the discovery; it shows also the archbishop's opinion of the king's character, with the effect upon his own mind of the evidence which the chancellor, at the king's command, had laid before him.

We return to the prisoners in the Tower. Mark Smeton, who had confessed his guilt, was ironed.² The other gentlemen, not in consideration of their silence, but of their rank, were treated more leniently. To the queen, with an object which may be variously interpreted, Henry wrote the Friday succeeding her arrest, holding out hopes of forgiveness if she would be honest and open with him. Persons who assume that the whole transaction was the scheme of a wicked husband to dispose of a wife of whom he was weary, will believe that he was practising upon her terror to obtain his freedom by a lighter crime than murder. Those who consider that he possessed the ordinary qualities of humanity, and that he was really convinced of her guilt, may explain his offer as the result of natural feeling. But in whatever motive his conduct originated, it was ineffectual. Anne, either knowing that she was innocent, or trusting that her guilt could not be proved, trusting, as Sir Edmund Baynton thought, to the constancy of Weston and Norris,³ declined to confess anything. "*If any man accuse me,*" she said to Kingston, "*I can but say nay; and they can bring no witness.*"⁴ Instead of acknowledging any guilt in herself, she perhaps retaliated upon the king in the celebrated letter which has been thought

¹ Printed in BURNET, vol. i. p. 322, et seq.

² "Mark is the worst cherished of any man in the house, for he wears irons."—Kingston to Cromwell. Later writers have assured themselves that Smeton's confession was extorted from him by promises of pardon. Why, then, was the government so impolitic as to treat him with especial harshness so early in the transaction? When he found himself "ironed," he must have been assured that faith would not be kept with him; and he had abundant time to withdraw what he had said.

³ The sentence is mutilated, but the meaning seems intelligible: "The queen standeth stiffly in her opinion that she wo . . . which I think is in the trust that she [hath in the] other two"—i.e. Norris and Weston.—Baynton to the Lord Treasurer. The government seems to have been aware of some secret communication between her and Norris.—*Ibid.*: SINGER, p. 458.

⁴ Kingston to Cromwell: SINGER, p. 457.

a proof both of her own innocence, and of the conspiracy by which she was destroyed.¹ This letter also, although at once so well known and of so dubious authority, it is fair to give entire.

"SIR,—Your Grace's displeasure and my imprisonment are things so strange unto me, as what to write, or what to excuse, I am altogether ignorant. Whereas you send unto me (willing [me] to confess a truth, and to obtain your favour) by such an one whom you know to be mine antient professed enemy, I no sooner conceived this message by him, than I rightly conceived your meaning; and if, as you say, confessing a truth indeed may procure my safety, I shall with all willingness and duty perform your command.

"But let not your Grace ever imagine that your poor wife will ever be brought to acknowledge a fault where not so much as a thought thereof proceeded. And to speak a truth, never prince had wife more loyal in all duty, and in all true affection, than you have ever found in Anne Boleyn; with which name and place I could willingly have contented myself, if God and your Grace's pleasure had been so pleased. Neither did I at any time so far forget myself in my exaltation or received queenship, but that I always looked for such an alteration as now I find: for the ground of my preferment being on no surer foundation than your Grace's fancy, the least alteration I knew was fit and sufficient to draw that fancy to some other subject. You have chosen me from a low estate to be your queen and companion, far beyond my desert or desire. If then you found me worthy of such honour, good your Grace, let not any light fancy or bad counsel of mine enemies withdraw your princely favour from me; neither let that stain, that unworthy stain, of a disloyal heart towards your good Grace, ever cast so foul a blot on your most dutiful wife, and the infant princess, your daughter.

"Try me, good king, but let me have a lawful trial; and let not my sworn enemies sit as my accusers and my judges; yea, let me receive an open trial, for my truth shall fear no open

¹ My first impression of this letter was strongly in favour of its authenticity. I still allow it to stand in the text because it exists, and because there is no evidence, external or internal, to prove it to be a forgery. The more carefully I have examined the MS., however, the greater uncertainty I have felt about it. It is not an original. It is not an official copy. It does not appear, though here I cannot speak conclusively, to be even a contemporary copy. The only guide to the date is the watermark on the paper, and in this instance the evidence is indecisive.—Note to the 2nd edition.

shame. Then shall you see either mine innocence cleared, your suspicions and conscience satisfied, the ignominy and slander of the world stopped, or my guilt openly declared; so that, whatsoever God or you may determine of me, your Grace may be freed from an open censure; and mine offence being so lawfully proved, your Grace is at liberty, both before God and man, not only to execute worthy punishment on me, as an unlawful wife, but to follow your affection already settled on that party for whose sake I am now as I am, whose name I could some good while since have pointed unto; your Grace not being ignorant of my suspicion therein.

"But if you have already determined of me; and that not only my death, but an infamous slander, must bring you the enjoying of your desired happiness; then I desire of God that he will pardon your great sin therein, and likewise my enemies the instruments thereof; and that He will not call you to a strict account for your unprincely and cruel usage of me, at his general judgment-seat, where both you and myself must shortly appear; and in whose judgment, I doubt not, whatsoever the world may think of me, mine innocence shall be openly known and sufficiently cleared.

"My last and only request shall be, that myself may only bear the burden of your Grace's displeasure, and that it may not touch the innocent souls of those poor gentlemen who, as I understand, are likewise in strait imprisonment for my sake. If ever I have found favour in your sight, if ever the name of Anne Boleyn hath been pleasing in your ears, then let me obtain this request; and I will so leave to trouble your Grace any further; with mine earnest prayers to the Trinity, to have your Grace in his good keeping, and to direct you in all your actions. From my doleful prison in the Tower, this 6th of May. Your most loyal and ever faithful wife,

"ANNE BOLEYN."¹

This letter is most affecting; and although it is better calculated to plead the queen's cause with posterity than with the king, whom it could only exasperate, yet if it is genuine it tells (so far as such a composition can tell at all) powerfully in her favour. On the same page of the manuscript, carrying the same authority, and subject to the same doubt, is a fragment of another letter, supposed to have been written subsequently, and therefore in answer to a second invitation to confess. In this

¹ BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 87; *Cotton. MS.*

she replied again, that she could confess no more than she had already spoken; that she might conceal nothing from the king, to whom she did acknowledge herself so much bound for so many favours; for raising her first from a mean woman to be a marchioness; next to be his queen; and now, seeing he could bestow no further honours upon her on earth, for purposing by martyrdom to make her a saint in heaven.¹ This answer also was unwise in point of worldly prudence; and I am obliged to add, that the tone which was assumed, both in this and in her first letter, was unbecoming (even if she was innocent of actual sin) in a wife who, on her own showing, was so gravely to blame. It is to be remembered that she had betrayed from the first the king's confidence; and, as she knew at the moment at which she was writing, she had never been legally married to him.

Her spirits meanwhile had something rallied, though still violently fluctuating. "One hour," wrote Kingston,² "she is determined to die, and the next hour much contrary to that." Sometimes she talked in a wild, wandering way, wondering whether any one made the prisoners' beds, with other of those light trifles which women's minds dwell upon so strangely, when strained beyond their strength. "There would be no rain," she said, "till she was out of the Tower; and if she died, they would see the greatest punishment for her that ever came to England." "And then," she added, "I shall be a saint in heaven, for I have done many good deeds in my days; but I think it much unkindness in the king to put such about me as I never loved."³ Kingston was a hard chronicler, too convinced of the queen's guilt to feel compassion for her; and yet these rambling fancies are as touching as Ophelia's; and, unlike hers, are no creation of a poet's imagination, but words once truly uttered by a poor human being in her hour of agony. Yet they prove nothing. And if her wanderings seem to breathe of innocence, they are yet compatible with the absence of it. We must remind ourselves, that two of the prisoners had already confessed both their own guilt and hers.

The queen demanded a trial; it was not necessary to ask for it. Both she and her supposed accomplices were tried with a scrupulousness without a parallel, so far as I am aware, in the criminal records of the time. The substance of the proceedings

¹ STRYPE'S *Eccles. Memorials*, vol. i. Lord Bacon speaks of these words as a message sent by the queen on the morning of the execution.

² Kingston to Cromwell: SINGER, p. 456.

³ Ibid. p. 457.

is preserved in an official summary;¹ and distressing as it is to read of such sad matters, the importance of arriving at a fair judgment must excuse the details which will be entered into. The crime was alike hideous, whether it was the crime of the queen or of Henry; we may not attempt to hide from ourselves the full deformity of it.

On the 24th of April, then, a special commission was appointed, to try certain persons for offences committed at London, at Hampton Court, and at the palace at Greenwich. The offences in question having been committed in Middlesex and in Kent, bills were first to be returned by the grand juries of both counties.

Men are apt to pass vaguely over the words "a commission" or "a jury," regarding them rather as mechanical abstractions than as bodies of responsible men. I shall therefore give the list of the persons who, in these or any other capacities, were engaged upon the trials. The special commission consisted of Sir Thomas Audeley, the lord chancellor; the Duke of Norfolk, uncle of the queen and of Lord Rochfort; the Duke of Suffolk, the king's brother-in-law; the Earl of Wiltshire, the queen's father; the Earls of Oxford, Westmoreland, and Sussex; Lord Sandys; Thomas Cromwell; Sir William Fitzwilliam the Lord High Admiral, an old man whose career had been of the most distinguished brilliancy; Sir William Paulet, lord treasurer, afterwards Marquis of Winchester; and, finally, the nine judges of the Courts of Westminster, Sir John Fitzjames, Sir John Baldewyn, Sir Richard Lister, Sir John Porte, Sir John Spelman, Sir Walter Luke, Sir Anthony Fitzherbert, Sir Thomas Englefield, and Sir William Shelley. The duty of this tribunal was to try the four commoners accused of adultery with the queen. She herself, with her brother, would be tried by the House of Lords. Of the seven peers, three were her own nearest connections; the remaining commissioners were those who, individually and professionally, might have been considered competent for the conduct of the cause above all other persons in the realm. Antecedently to experience, we should not have expected that a commission so constituted would have lent itself to a conspiracy; and if foul play had been intended, we should have looked to see some baser instruments selected for so iniquitous a purpose.

In the middle of the second week in May, the grand juries had

¹ BAGA DE SECRETIS, pouches 8 and 9: Appendix II. to the *Third Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records*.

completed their work. On the 10th, a true bill was found at Westminster, by the oaths of Giles Heron, Esq.; Roger More, Esq.; Richard Awnsham, Esq.; Thomas Byllyngton, Esq.; Gregory Lovel, Esq.; John Worsop, Esq.; William Goddard, gentleman; William Blakwall, gentleman; John Wylford, gentleman; William Berd, gentleman; Henry Hubbylthorne, gentleman; William Huning, gentleman; Robert Walys, gentleman; John Englund, gentleman; Henry Lodysman, gentleman; and John Averey, gentleman.

On the 11th a true bill was found at Deptford by the oaths of Sir Richard Clement, Sir William Fynche, Sir Edward Boughton, Anthony St. Leger, Esq.;¹ John Cromer, Esq.; John Fogg, Esq.; Thomas Wylleford, Esq.; John Norton, Esq.; Humphrey Style, Esq.; Robert Fisher, gentleman; Thomas Sybbell, gentleman; John Lovelace, gentleman; Walter Harrington, gentleman; Edmund Page, gentleman; Thomas Fereby, gentleman; and Lionel Ansty, gentleman.

I am thus particular in recording the names of these jurors, before I relate the indictment which was found by them, because, if that indictment was unjust, it stamps their memory with eternal infamy; and with the judges, the commissioners, the privy council, the king, with every living person who was a party, active or passive, to so enormous a calumny, they must be remembered with shame for ever.

The indictment, then, found by the grand jury of Middlesex was to the following effect:²—

“1. That the Lady Anne, Queen of England, having been the wife of the king for the space of three years and more, she, the said Lady Anne, contemning the marriage so solemnised between her and the king, and bearing malice in her heart against the king, and following her frail and carnal lust, did falsely and traitorously procure, by means of indecent language, gifts, and other acts therein stated, divers of the king's daily and familiar servants to be her adulterers and concubines; so that several of the king's servants, by the said queen's most vile provocation and invitation, became given and inclined to the said queen.

“2. That the queen [on the] 6th of October, 25 Hen. VIII.

¹ We shall meet him again in Ireland: he was the queen's cousin, and a man of the very highest character and ability. The grand jury of Kent were nominated by Sir Thomas Wyatt, who was sheriff for that year. This is not unimportant, for Wyatt in past times had been Anne's intimate friend, if not her lover.

² The indictment found at Deptford was exactly similar; referring to other acts of the same kind, committed by the same persons at Greenwich.

[1533], at Westminster, by words, etc., procured and incited one Henry Norris, Esq., one of the gentlemen of the king's privy chamber, to have illicit intercourse with her; and that the act was committed at Westminster, 12th October, 25 Hen. VIII.

" 3. That the queen, 2nd of November, 27 Hen. VIII. [1535], by the means therein stated, procured and incited George Boleyn, knight, Lord Rochfort, her own natural brother, to have illicit intercourse with her; and that the act was committed 5th of November in the same year, at Westminster, against the commands of Almighty God, and all laws human and divine.

" 4. That the queen, 3rd December, 25 Hen. VIII., procured and incited William Brereton, Esq., one of the gentlemen of the king's privy chamber, to have illicit intercourse with her; and that the act was committed at Hampton Court, 25th December, 25 Hen. VIII.

" 5. That the queen, 8th of May, 26 Hen. VIII., procured and incited Francis Weston, one of the gentlemen of the king's privy chamber, to have illicit intercourse with her; and that the act was committed at Westminster, 20th May, 26 Hen. VIII.

" 6. That the queen, 12th of April, 26 Hen. VIII., procured and incited Mark Smeton, Esq., one of the grometers of the king's chamber, to have illicit intercourse with her; and that the act was committed at Westminster, 26th April, 26 Henry VIII.

" 7. Furthermore, that the said George, Lord Rochfort, Henry Norris, William Brereton, Sir Francis Weston, and Mark Smeton, being thus inflamed by carnal love of the queen, and having become very jealous of each other, did, in order to secure her affections, satisfy her inordinate desires; and that the queen was equally jealous of the Lord Rochfort and other the before-mentioned traitors; and she would not allow them to show any familiarity with any other woman, without her exceeding displeasure and indignation; and that on the 27th day of November, 27 Hen. VIII., and other days, at Westminster, she gave them gifts and great rewards, to inveigle them to her will.

" 8. Furthermore, that the queen, and other the said traitors, jointly and severally, 31st of October, 27 Hen. VIII., and at various times before and after, compassed and imagined the king's death; and that the queen had frequently promised to marry some one of the traitors, whenever the king should depart this life, affirming she never would love the king in her heart.

" 9. Furthermore, that the king, having within a short time before become acquainted with the before-mentioned crimes,

vices, and treasons, had been so grieved that certain harms and dangers had happened to his royal body." ¹

I suppose that persons who have made up their minds conclusively, and are resolved to abide by the popular verdict of English historians, will turn with disgust from these hideous charges; seeming, as they do, to overstep all ordinary bounds of credibility. On one side or the other there was indeed no common guilt. The colours deepen at every step. But it is to be remembered that if the improbability of crimes so revolting is becoming greater, the opposite improbability increases with equal strength—that English noblemen and gentlemen could have made themselves a party to the invention of the story. For invention is unfortunately the only word; would indeed that any other were admissible! The discovery of the indictment disposes at once of Burnet's legend, that the queen was condemned on hearsay evidence; or that her guilt was conjectured from an exaggerated report of foolish conversations. It cuts off all hope, too, of possible mistake. I have heard the name of Leontes mentioned as a parallel to Henry; and if the question lay only between the king and his wife, we would gladly welcome the alternative. Charity would persuade us that a husband had been madly blind, sooner far than that a queen had been madly wicked. But this road for escape is closed. The mistake of Leontes was transparent to every eye but his own. The charges against Anne Boleyn were presented by two grand juries before the highest judicial tribunal in the realm. There was nothing vague, nothing conjectural. The detail was given of acts and conversations stretching over a period of two years and more; and either there was evidence for these things, or there was none. If there was evidence, it must have been close, elaborate, and minute; if there was none, these judges, these juries and noblemen, were the accomplices of the king in a murder perhaps the most revolting which was ever committed.

It may be thought that the evidence was pieced together in the secrets of the cabinet; that the juries found their bills on a case presented to them by the council. This would transfer the infamy to a higher stage; but if we try to imagine how the council proceeded in such a business, we shall not find it an easy task. The council, at least, could not have been deceived. The evidence, whatever it was, must have been examined by them; and though we stretch our belief in the complacency of statesmen to the furthest limit of credulity, can we believe that

¹ BAGA DE SECRETIS, pouch 9.

Cromwell would have invented that dark indictment,—Cromwell who was, and who remained till his death, the dearest friend of Latimer? Or the Duke of Norfolk, the veteran who had won his spurs at Flodden? Or the Duke of Suffolk and Sir William Fitzwilliam, the Wellington and the Nelson of the sixteenth century? Scarcely among the picked scoundrels of Newgate could men be found for such work; and shall we believe it of men like these? It is to me impossible. Yet, if it was done at all, it was done by those four ministers.

Even if we could believe that they forged the accusations, yet they would at least limit the dimensions of them. The most audacious villain will not extend his crimes beyond what he requires for his object; and if the king desired only to rid himself of his wife, to what purpose the multiplication of offenders, and the long list of acts of guilt, when a single offence with the one accomplice who was ready to abide by a confession, would have sufficed? The four gentlemen gratuitously, on this hypothesis, entangled in the indictment, were nobly connected: one of them, Lord Rochfort, was himself a peer; they had lived, all four, several years at the court, and were personally known to every member of the council. Are we to suppose that evidence was invented with no imaginable purpose, for wanton and needless murders?—that the council risked the success of their scheme, by multiplying charges which only increased difficulty of proof, and provoked the interference of the powerful relations of the accused? ¹

¹ Sir Francis Bryan, the queen's cousin, was at first suspected. He was absent from the court, and received a message from Cromwell to appear instantly on his allegiance. The following extract is from the Deposition of the Abbot of Woburn—*MS. Cotton. Cleopatra, E iv.*:

"The said abbot remembereth that at the fall of Queen Anne, whom God pardon, Master Bryan, being in the country, was suddenly sent for by the Lord Privy Seal, as the said Master Bryan afterwards shewed me, charging him upon his allegiance to come to him wheresoever he was within this realm upon the sight of his letter, and so he did with all speed. And at his next repair to Ampthill, I came to visit him there, at what time the Lord Grey of Wilton, with many other men of worship, was with him in the great court at Ampthill aforesaid. And at my coming in at the outer gate Master Bryan perceived me, and of his much gentleness came towards meeting me; to whom I said, 'Now welcome home and never so welcome.' He, astonished, said unto me, 'Why so?' The said abbot said, 'Sir, I shall shew you that at leisure,' and walked up into the great chamber with the men of worship. And after a pause it pleased him to sit down upon a bench and willed me to sit by him, and after that demanded of me what I meant when I said, 'Never so welcome as then;' to whom I said thus: 'Sir, Almighty God in his first creation made an order of angels, and among all made one principal, which was the —, who would not be content with his estate, but affected the celsitude and rule of Creator, for the which he was divested from the altitude of heaven into the profundity

Such are the difficulties in which, at this early stage of the transaction, we are already implicated. They will not diminish as we proceed.

Friday, the 12th of May, was fixed for the opening of the court. On that day, a petty jury was returned at Westminster, for the trial of Sir Henry Norris, Sir Francis Weston, Sir William Brereton, and Mark Smeton. The commission sat—the Earl of Wiltshire sitting with them¹—and the four prisoners were brought to the bar. On their arraignment, Mark Smeton, we are told, pleaded guilty of adultery with the queen; not guilty of the other charges. Norris, Weston, and Brereton severally pleaded not guilty. Verdict, guilty. The king's sergeant and attorney pray judgment. Judgment upon Smeton, Norris, Weston, and Brereton as usual in cases of high treason. This is all which the record contains. The nature of the evidence is not mentioned. But again there was a jury; and if we have not the evidence which convinced that jury, we have the evidence that they were, or professed to be, convinced.

The queen and her brother were to be tried on the following Monday. Their crime was not adultery only, but was coloured with the deeper stain of incest. On the Friday, while the other prisoners were at the bar, "Letters patent were addressed to Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, Treasurer and Earl Marshal of

of hell into everlasting darkness, without repair or return, with those that consented unto his pride. So it now lately befell in this our worldly hierarchy of the court by the fall of Queen Anne as a worldly Lucifer, not content with her estate to be true unto her creator, making her his queen, but affected unlawful concupiscence, fell suddenly out of that felicity wherein she was set, irrecoverably with all those that consented unto her lust, whereof I am glad that ye were never; and, therefore, now welcome and never so welcome, here is the end of my tale.' And then he said unto me: 'Sir, indeed, as you say, I was suddenly sent for, marvelling thereof and debating the matter in my mind why this should be; at the last I considered and knew myself true and clear in conscience unto my prince, and with all speed and without fear [hastily set] me forward and came to my Lord Privy Seal, and after that to the King's Grace, and nothing found in me, nor never shall be, but just and true to my master the King's Grace.' And then I said 'Benedictus, but this was a marvellous peremptory commandment,' said I, 'and would have astonished the wisest man in this realm.' And he said, 'What then, he must needs do his master's commandment, and I assure you there never was a man wiser to order the king's causes than he is; I pray God save his life.' "

The language both of Sir Francis Bryan and the abbot is irreconcilable with any other supposition, except that they at least were satisfied of the queen's guilt.

¹ BAGA DE SECRETIS, pouch 8. The discovery of these papers sets at rest the controversy whether the Earl of Wiltshire took part in the trial. He was absent at the trial of his children; he was present at the trial of the other prisoners.

England, setting forth that the Lady Anne, Queen of England, and Sir George Boleyn, knight, Lord Rochfort, had been indicted of certain capital crimes; and that the king, considering that justice was a most excellent virtue, and pleasing to the Most Highest; and inasmuch as the office of High Steward of England, whose presence for the administration of the law in this case is required, was vacant, the king therefore appointed the said duke Lord High Steward of England, with full powers to receive the indictments found against Queen Anne and the Lord Rochfort, and calling them before him, for the purpose of hearing and examining them, and compelling them to answer thereto." The duke was to collect also "such and so many lords, peers, and magnates of the kingdom of England, peers of the said Queen Anne and Lord Rochfort, by whom the truth could be better known; and the truth being known, to give judgment according to the laws and customs of England, and to give sentence and judgment, and to direct execution, with the other usual powers."¹ As a certain number only of the peers were summoned, it may be imagined that some fraud was practised in the selection, and that those only were admitted whose subserviency could be relied upon. I will therefore give the names as before.

The two English Dukes, of Norfolk and Suffolk.² The one English Marquis, of Exeter. The Earls of Arundel, Oxford, Northumberland (the queen's early lover), Westmoreland, Derby, Worcester, Rutland, Sussex, and Huntingdon; all the earls in the peerage except four—those of Shrewsbury, Essex, Cumberland, and Wiltshire. Why the first three were omitted I do not know. Lord Wiltshire had already fulfilled his share of the miserable duty; he was not compelled to play the part of Brutus, and condemn, in person, his two children. The remaining peers were the Lords Audeley, De la Ware, Montague, Morley, Dacre, Cobham, Maltravers, Powis, Mounteagle, Clinton, Sandys, Windsor, Wentworth, Burgh, and Mordaunt: twenty-seven in all: men hitherto of unblemished honour—the noblest blood in the realm.

These noblemen assembled in the Tower on the 15th of May. The queen was brought before them; and the record in the *Baga de Secretis* relates the proceedings as follows:—

"Before the Lord High Steward at the Tower, Anne, Queen of England, comes in the custody of Sir William Kingston,

¹ *BAGA DE SECRETIS*, pouch 9.

² The Duke of Richmond was under age.

Constable of the Tower, and is brought to the bar. Being arraigned of the before-mentioned treasons, she pleads not guilty, and puts herself upon her peers; whereupon the Duke of Suffolk, Marquis of Exeter, and others the before-mentioned earls and barons, peers of the said queen, being charged by the said Lord High Steward to say the truth, and afterwards being examined severally by the Lord High Steward, from the lowest peer to the highest, each of them severally saith that she is guilty.

"Judgment—that the queen be taken by the said Constable back to the king's prison within the Tower; and then, as the king shall command, be brought to the green within the said Tower, and there burned or beheaded, as shall please the king."¹

In such cold lines is the story of this tragedy unrolling itself to its close. The course which it followed, however, was less hard in the actual life; and men's hearts, even in those stern times, could beat with human emotions. The Duke of Norfolk was in tears as he passed sentence.² The Earl of Northumberland "was obliged by a sudden illness to leave the court."³ The sight of the woman whom he had once loved, and to whom he was perhaps married, in that dreadful position, had been more than he could bear; and the remainder of the work of the day went forward without him.

The queen withdrew. Her brother took his place at the bar. Like Anne, he declared himself innocent. Like Anne, he was found guilty, and sentenced to die.⁴

¹ BAGA DE SECRETIS, pouch 9.

² CONSTANTYNE, *Archæologia*, vol. xxiii. p. 66.

³ BAGA DE SECRETIS. When the Pilgrimage of Grace broke out four months later, Northumberland was the only nobleman in the power of the insurgents who refused to join in the rebellion. They threatened to kill him; but "at that and all times the earl was very earnest against the commons in the king's behalf and the Lord Privy Seal's."—Confession of William Stapleton: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 2.

⁴ I know not whether I should here add the details which Meteren gives of these trials. His authority, a Flemish gentleman, was in London at the time, but was not present in the court. The Lord of Milherve (that was this gentleman's name) was persuaded that the queen was unjustly accused, and he worked out of the rumours which he heard an interesting picture, touched with natural sympathy. It has been often repeated, however. It may be read elsewhere; and as an authority it is but of faint importance. If we allow it its fullest weight, it proves that a foreigner then in England believed the queen innocent, and that she defended herself with an eloquence which deeply touched her hearers. His further assertion, that "Smeton's confession was all which was alleged" against her, is certainly inaccurate; and his complaint, which has been so often echoed, of the absence of witnesses, implies only a want of knowledge of the forms which were observed in trials for high treason. The witnesses were not brought

We can form no estimate of the evidence; for we do not know what it was. We cannot especially accuse the form of the trial; for it was the form which was always observed. But the fact remains to us, that these twenty-seven peers, who were not ignorant, as we are, but were fully acquainted with the grounds of the prosecution, did deliberately, after hearing the queen's defence, pronounce against her a unanimous verdict. If there was foul play, they had advantages infinitely greater than any to which we can pretend for detecting it. The Boleyns were unpopular, and Anne herself was obnoxious to the imperialists and Catholics; but all parties, Catholic and Protestant alike, united in the sentence.

Looking at the case, then, as it now stands, we have the report for some time current, that the queen was out of favour, and that the king's affection was turned in another direction, a report, be it observed, which had arisen before the catastrophe, and was not, therefore, an afterthought, or legend; we have also the antecedent improbability, which is very great, that a lady in the queen's position could have been guilty of the offences with which the indictment charges her. We have also the improbability, which is great, that the king, now forty-four years old, who in his earlier years had been distinguished for the absence of those vices in which contemporary princes indulged themselves, in wanton weariness of a woman for whom he had revolutionised the kingdom, and quarrelled with half Christendom, suddenly resolved to murder her; that, instead of resorting to poison, or to the less obtrusive methods of criminality, he invented, and persuaded his council to assist him in inventing, a series of accusations which reflected dishonour on himself, and which involved the gratuitous death of five persons, with whom he had no quarrel, who were attached to his court and person. To maintain these accusations, he would have to overawe into an active participation in his crime, judges, juries, peers, the dearest relations of those whom he was destroying, and this with no standing army, no prætorians or janissaries at his back, with no force but the yeomen of the guard, who could be scattered by a rising of the apprentices. He had gone out of his way, moreover, to call a parliament; and the summons had been so hasty that no time was left to control the elections; while again to fail was ruin; and the

into court and confronted with the prisoner: their depositions were taken on oath before the grand juries and the privy council, and on the trial were read out for the accused to answer as they could.

generation of Englishmen to whom we owe the Reformation were not so wholly lost to all principles of honour, that Henry could have counted beforehand upon success in so desperate a scheme with that absolute certainty without which he would scarcely have risked the experiment. I think that there is some improbability here. Unlikely as it is that queens should disgrace themselves, history contains unfortunately more than one instance that it is not impossible. That queens in that very age were capable of profligacy was proved, but a few years later, by the confessions of Catherine Howard. I believe history will be ransacked vainly to find a parallel for conduct at once so dastardly, so audacious, and so foolishly wicked as that which the popular hypothesis attributes to Henry VIII.

This is a fair statement of the probabilities; not, I believe, exaggerated on either side. Turning to the positive facts which are known to us, we have amongst those which make for the queen her own denial of her guilt; her supposed letter to the king, which wears the complexion of innocence; the assertions of three out of the five other persons who were accused, up to the moment of their execution; and the sympathising story of a Flemish gentleman who believed her innocent, and who says that many other people in England believed the same. On the other side, we have the judicial verdict of more than seventy noblemen and gentlemen,¹ no one of whom had any interest in the deaths of the accused, and some of whom had interests the most tender in their acquittal; we have the assent of the judges who sat on the commission, and who passed sentence, after full opportunities of examination, with all the evidence before their eyes; the partial confession of one of the prisoners, though afterwards withdrawn; and the complete confession of another, maintained till the end, and not withdrawn upon the scaffold. Mr. Hallam must pardon me for saying that this is not a matter in which doubt is unpermitted.

A brief interval only was allowed between the judgment and the final close. On Wednesday, the 17th, the five gentlemen were taken to execution. Smeton was hanged; the others beheaded. Smeton and Brereton acknowledged the justice of their sentence. Brereton said that if he had to die a thousand deaths, he deserved them all; and Brereton was the only one of the five whose guilt at the time was doubted.² Norris died

¹ Two grand juries, the petty jury, and the twenty-seven peers.

² *CONSTANTYNE'S Memor., Archæol.*, vol. xxiii. pp. 63-66. Constantyne was an attendant of Sir Henry Norris at this time, and a friend and school-fellow of Sir W. Brereton. He was a resolute Protestant, and he says that

silent; Weston with a few general lamentations on the wickedness of his past life. None denied the crime for which they suffered; all but one were considered by the spectators to have confessed. Rochfort had shown some feeling while in the Tower. Kingston on one occasion found him weeping bitterly. The day of the trial he sent a petition to the king, to what effect I do not learn; and on the Tuesday he begged to see Cromwell, having something on his conscience, as he said, which he wished to tell him.¹ His desire, however, does not seem to have been complied with; he spoke sorrowfully on the scaffold of the shame which he had brought upon the gospel, and died with words which appeared to the spectators, if not a confession, yet something very nearly resembling it. "This said lord," wrote a spectator to the court at Brussels, "made a good Catholic address to the people. He said that he had not come there to preach to them, but rather to serve as a mirror and an example. He acknowledged the crimes which he had committed against God, and against the king his sovereign; there was no occasion for him, he said, to repeat the cause for which he was condemned; they would have little pleasure in hearing him tell it. He prayed God, and he prayed the king, to pardon his offences; and all others whom he might have injured he also prayed to forgive him as heartily as he forgave every one. He bade his hearers avoid the vanities of the world, and the flatteries of the court which had brought him to the shameful end which had overtaken him. Had he obeyed the lessons of that gospel which he had so often read, he said he should not have fallen so far; it was worth more to be a good doer than a good reader. Finally, he forgave those who had adjudged him to die, and he desired them to pray God for his soul."²

The queen was left till a further mystery had perplexed yet deeper the disgraceful exposure. Henry had desired Cranmer to be her confessor. The archbishop was with her on the day after her trial,³ and she then made an extraordinary avowal,⁴ at first he and all other friends of the gospel were unable to believe that the queen had behaved so abominably. "As I may be saved before God," he says, "I could not believe it, afore I heard them speak at their death." . . . But on the scaffold, he adds, "In a manner all confessed but Mr. Norris, who said almost nothing at all."

¹ Kingston to Cromwell: SINGER, p. 459.

² *The Pilgrim*: Appendix, p. 116.

³ Kingston to Cromwell; and see CONSTANTYNE's *Memorial*.

⁴ "Now of late, God, of his infinite goodness, from whom no secret things can be hid, hath caused to be brought to light, evident and open knowledge of certain just, true, and lawful impediments, unknown at the making of the said acts [by which the marriage had been declared legitimate], and

either that she had been married or contracted in early life, or had been entangled in some connection which invalidated her marriage with the king. The letter to the emperor which I have already quoted,¹ furnishes the solitary explanation of the mystery which remains. Some one, apparently the imperial ambassador, informed Charles that she was discovered to have been nine years before married to Lord Percy, not formally only, but really and completely. If this be true, her fate need scarcely excite further sympathy.

On Wednesday she was taken to Lambeth, where she made her confession in form, and the archbishop, sitting judicially, pronounced her marriage with the king to have been null and void. The supposition, that this business was a freak of caprice or passion, is too puerile to be considered. It is certain that she acknowledged something; and it is certain also that Lord Northumberland was examined upon the subject before the archbishop. In person upon oath indeed, and also in a letter to Cromwell, Northumberland denied that he had ever been legally connected with her; but perhaps Northumberland was afraid to make an admission so dangerous to himself, or perhaps the confession itself was a vague effort which she made to save her life.² But whatever she said, and whether she spoke truth or falsehood, she was pronounced divorced, and the divorce did not save her.³ Friday, the 19th, was fixed for her death; and when she found that there was no hope she recovered her spirits. The last scene was to be on the green inside the Tower. The public were to be admitted; but Kingston suggested that to avoid a crowd it was desirable not to fix the hour, since it was supposed that she would make no further confession.

"This morning she sent for me," he added, "that I might be with her at such time as she received the good Lord, to the intent that I should hear her speak as touching her innocency always to be clear. 'Mr. Kingston,' she said, 'I hear say I shall not

since that time confessed by the Lady Anne, by the which it plainly appeareth that the said marriage was never good nor consonant to the laws."—28 Henry VIII. cap. 7.

¹ Vol. i. p. 113.

² On the day on which she first saw the archbishop, she said, at dinner, that she expected to be spared, and that she would retire to Antwerp.—Kingston to Cromwell: SINGER, p. 460.

³ Burnet raises a dilemma here. If, he says, the queen was not married to the king, there was no adultery; and the sentence of death and the sentence of divorce mutually neutralise each other. It is impossible that in the general horror at so complicated a delinquency, the technical defence was overlooked.

die afore noon, and I am very sorry therefore, for I thought to be dead by this time, and past my pain.' I told her it should be no pain, it was so subtle; and then she said, 'I heard say the executioner was very good, and I have a little neck,' and put her hands about it, laughing heartily. I have seen many men, and also women, executed, and they have been in great sorrow; and to my knowledge, this lady hath much joy and pleasure in death."¹

We are very near the termination of the tragedy. A little before noon on the 19th of May, Anne Boleyn, Queen of England, was led down to the green. A single cannon stood loaded on the battlements; the motionless cannoneer was ready with smoking linstock to tell London that all was over. The yeomen of the guard were there, and a crowd of citizens; the lord mayor in his robes, the deputies of the guilds, the sheriffs, and the aldermen; they were come to see a spectacle which England had never seen before—a head which had worn a crown falling under the sword of an executioner.

On the scaffold, by the king's desire, there were present Cromwell, the Lord Chancellor, the Duke of Suffolk, and lastly, the Duke of Richmond, who might now, when both his sisters were illegitimised, be considered heir presumptive to the throne. As in the choice of the commission, as in the conduct of the trial, as in the summons of parliament, as in every detail through which the cause was passed, Henry had shown outwardly but one desire to do all which the most strict equity prescribed; so around this last scene he had placed those who were nearest in blood to himself, and nearest in rank to the crown. If she who was to suffer was falling under a forged charge, he acted his part with horrible completeness.

The queen appeared walking feebly, supported by the Lieutenant of the Tower. She seemed half stupified, and looked back from time to time at the ladies by whom she was followed. On reaching the platform, she asked if she might say a few words,² and permission being granted she turned to the spectators and said: "Christian people, I am come to die. And according to law, and by law, I am judged to death; and therefore I will speak nothing against it. I am come hither to accuse no man, nor to speak anything of that whereof I am accused and condemned to die. But I pray God save the king, and send him long to reign over you; for a gentler and more merciful

¹ Kingston to Cromwell: SINGER, 461.

² Letter of — to —: *The Pilgrim*, p. 116.

prince was there never; and to me he was ever a good, a gentle, and sovereign lord. If any person will meddle of my cause, I require him to judge the best. And thus I take my leave of the world and of you; and I heartily desire you all to pray for me. Oh, Lord, have mercy on me. To God I commend my soul."¹ "These words," says Stow, "she spoke with a smiling countenance." She wore an ermine cloak which was then taken off. She herself removed her headdress, and one of her attendants gave her a cap into which she gathered her hair. She then knelt, and breathing faintly a commendation of her soul to Christ, the executioner with a single blow struck off her head. A white handkerchief was thrown over it as it fell, and one of the ladies took it up and carried it away. The other women lifted the body and bore it into the Chapel of the Tower, where it was buried in the choir.²

Thus she too died without denying the crime for which she suffered. Smeton confessed from the first. Brereton, Weston, Rochfort, virtually confessed on the scaffold. Norris said nothing. Of all the sufferers not one ventured to declare that he or she was innocent—and that six human beings should leave the world with the undeserved stain of so odious a charge on them, without attempting to clear themselves, is credible only to those who form opinions by their wills, and believe or disbelieve as they choose.

To this end the queen had come at last, and silence is the best comment which charity has to offer upon it. Better far it would have been if the dust had been allowed to settle down over the grave of Anne Boleyn, and her remembrance buried in forgetfulness. Strange it is that a spot which ought to have been sacred to pity, should have been made the arena for the blind wrestling of controversial duellists. Blind, I call it; for there has been little clearness of judgment, little even of common prudence in the choice of sides. If the Catholics could have fastened the stain of murder on the king and the statesmen of England, they would have struck the faith of the establishment a harder blow, than by a poor tale of scandal against a weak, erring, suffering woman: and the Protestants, in mistaken generosity, have courted an infamy for the names of those to whom they owe their being, which, staining the fountain, must stain for ever the stream which flows from it. It has been no

¹ WYATT'S *Memoirs*, HALL, STOW, CONSTANTYNE'S *Memorial*. There is some little variation in the different accounts, but none of importance.

² *Pilgrim*, p. 115.

pleasure to me to rake among the evil memories of the past, to prove a human being sinful whom the world has ruled to have been innocent. Let the blame rest with those who have forced upon our history the alternative of a re-assertion of the truth, or the shame of noble names which have not deserved it at our hands.

No sooner had the result of the trial appeared to be certain, than the prospects of the succession to the throne were seen to be more perplexed than ever. The prince so earnestly longed for had not been born. The disgrace of Anne Boleyn, even before her last confession, strengthened the friends of the Princess Mary. Elizabeth, the child of a doubtful marriage which had terminated in adultery and incest, would have had slight chance of being maintained, even if her birth had suffered no further stain; and by the Lambeth sentence she was literally and legally illegitimate. The King of Scotland was now the nearest heir; and next to him stood Lady Margaret Douglas, his sister, who had been born in England, and was therefore looked upon with better favour by the people. As if to make confusion worse confounded, in the midst of the uncertainty Lord Thomas Howard, taking advantage of the moment, and, as the act of his attainder says,¹ "being seduced by the devil, and not having the fear of God before his eyes," persuaded this lady into a contract of marriage with him; "The presumption being," says the same act, "that he aspired to the crown by reason of so high a marriage; or, at least, to the making division for the same; having a firm hope and trust *that the subjects of this realm*² *would incline and bear affection to the said Lady Margaret, being born in this realm; and not to the King of Scots, her brother, to whom this realm hath not, nor ever had, any affection; but would resist his attempt to the crown of this realm to the uttermost of their powers.*"³

Before the discovery of this proceeding, but in anticipation of inevitable intrigues of the kind, the privy council and the peers, on the same grounds which had before led them to favour the divorce from Catherine, petitioned the king to save the country from the perils which menaced it, and to take a fresh wife without an hour's delay. Henry's experience of matrimony had been so discouraging, that they feared he might be

¹ 28 Hen. VIII. cap. 24.

² This paragraph is of great importance: it throws a light on many of the most perplexing passages in this and the succeeding reigns.

³ 28 Hen. VIII. cap. 24.

reluctant to venture upon it again. Nevertheless, for his country's sake, they trusted that he would not refuse.¹

Henry, professedly in obedience to this request, was married, immediately after the execution, to Jane, daughter of Sir John Seymour. The indecent haste is usually considered a proof entirely conclusive of the cause of Anne Boleyn's ruin.² Under any aspect it was an extraordinary step, which requires to be gravely considered. Henry, who waited seven years for Anne Boleyn, to whom he was violently attached, was not without control over his passions; and if appetite had been the moving influence with him, he would scarcely, with the eyes of all the world upon him, have passed so extravagant an insult upon the nation of which he was the sovereign. If Jane Seymour had really been the object of a previous unlawful attachment, her conduct in accepting so instantly a position so frightfully made vacant, can scarcely be painted in too revolting colours. Yet Jane Seymour's name, at home and abroad, by Catholic and Protestant, was alike honoured and respected. Among all Henry's wives she stands out distinguished by a stainless name, untarnished with the breath of reproach.

If we could conceive the English nation so tongue-tied that they dared not whisper their feelings, there were Brussels, Paris, Rome, where the truth could be told; yet, with the exception of a single passage in a letter of Mary of Hungary,³

¹ Speech of the Lord Chancellor: *Lords' Journals*, p. 84. Statutes of the Realm; 28 Henry VIII. cap. 7. Similarly, on the death of Jane Seymour, the council urged immediate re-marriage on the king, considering a single prince an insufficient security for the future. In a letter of Cromwell's to the English ambassador at Paris, *on the day of Jane Seymour's death*, there is the following passage:

"And forasmuch as, though his Majesty is not anything disposed to marry again—albeit his Highness, God be thanked, taketh this chance as a man that by reason with force overcometh his affections may take such an extreme adventure—yet as sundry of his Grace's council here have thought it meet for us to be most humble suitors to his Majesty to consider the state of his realm, and to enter eftsoons into another matrimony: so his tender zeal to us his subjects hath already so much overcome his Grace's said disposition, and framed his mind both to be indifferent to the thing and to the election of any person from any part that, with deliberation, shall be thought meet for him, that we live in hope that his Grace will again couple himself to our comforts."—*State Papers*, vol. viii. p. 1.

² BURNET, HUME, STRICKLAND, etc. There is an absolute consensus of authorities.

³ "The king has, I understand, already married another woman, who, they say, is a good Imperialist. I know not whether she will so continue. He had shown an inclination for her before the other's death; and as neither that other herself, nor any of the rest who were put to death, confessed their guilt, except one who was a musician, some people think he invented the charge to get rid of her. However it be, no great wrong can

there is no hint in the correspondence, either in Paris, Simancas, or Brussels, that there was a suspicion of foul play. If Charles or Francis had believed Henry really capable of so deep atrocity, no political temptation would have induced either of them to commit their cousins or nieces to the embrace of a monster, yet no sooner was Jane Seymour dead, than we shall find them competing eagerly with each other to secure his hand.

It is quite possible that when Anne Boleyn was growing licentious the king may have distinguished a lady of acknowledged excellence by some in no way improper preference, and that when desired by the council to choose a wife immediately, he should have taken a person as unlike as possible to the one who had disgraced him. This was the interpretation which was given to his conduct by the Lords and Commons of England. In the absence of any evidence, or shadow of evidence, that among contemporaries who had means of knowing the truth, another judgment was passed upon it, the deliberate assertion of an act of parliament must be considered a safer guide than modern unsupported conjecture.¹

This matter having been accomplished, the king returned to London to meet parliament. The Houses assembled on the 8th of June; the peers had hastened up in unusual numbers, as if sensible of the greatness of the occasion. The Commons were untried and unknown; and if Anne Boleyn was an innocent victim, no king of England was ever in so terrible a position as Henry VIII. when he entered the Great Chamber fresh from his new bridal. He took his seat upon the throne; and then Audeley, the Lord Chancellor, rose and spoke: ²

"At the dissolution of the late parliament, the King's Highness had not thought so soon to meet you here again. He has called you together now, being moved thereunto by causes of

have been done to the woman herself. She is known to have been a worthless person. It has been her character for a long time.

"I suppose, if one may speak so lightly of such things, that when he is tired of his new wife he will find some occasion to quit himself of her also. Our sex will not be too well satisfied if these practices come into vogue; and, though I have no fancy to expose myself to danger, yet, being a woman, I will pray with the rest that God will have mercy on us."—*The Pilgrim*, p. 117.

¹ Within four months the northern counties were in arms. Castle and cottage and village pulpit rang with outcries against the government. Yet, in the countless reports of the complaints of the insurgents, there is no hint of a suspicion of foul play in the late tragedy. If the criminality of the king is self-evident to us, how could it have been less than evident to Aske and Lord Darcy?

² *Lords' Journals*, p. 84.

grave moment, affecting both his own person and the interests of the commonwealth. You will have again to consider the succession to the crown of this realm. His Highness knows himself to be but mortal, liable to fall sick, and to die.¹ At present he perceives the peace and welfare of the kingdom to depend upon his single life; and he is anxious to leave it, at his death, free from peril. He desires you therefore to nominate some person as his heir apparent, who, should it so befall him (which God forbid!) to depart out of this world without children lawfully begotten, may rule in peace over this land, with the consent and the goodwill of the inhabitants thereof.

"You will also deliberate upon the repeal of a certain act passed in the late parliament, by which the realm is bound to obedience to the Lady Anne Boleyn, late wife of the king, and the heirs lawfully begotten of them twain, and which declares all persons who shall, by word or deed, have offended against this lady or her offspring, to have incurred the penalties of treason.

"These are the causes for which you are assembled; and if you will be advised by me, you will act in these matters according to the words of Solomon, with whom our most gracious king may deservedly be compared. The 'wise man' counsels us to bear in mind such things as be past, to weigh well such things as be present, and provide prudently for the things which be to come. And you I would bid to remember, first, those sorrows and those burdens which the King's Highness did endure on the occasion of his first unlawful marriage—a marriage not only judged unlawful by the most famous universities in Christendom, but so determined by the consent of this realm; and to remember further the great perils which have threatened his most royal Majesty from the time when he entered on his second marriage.

"Then, turning to the present, you will consider in what state the realm now standeth with respect to the oath by which we be bound to the Lady Anne and to her offspring; the which Lady Anne, with her accomplices, has been found guilty of high treason, and has met the due reward of her conspiracies. And then you will ask yourselves, what man of common condition would not have been deterred by such calamities from venturing a third time into the state of matrimony. Nevertheless, our most excellent prince, not in any carnal concupiscence, but at the humble entreaty of his nobility, hath consented once more

¹ He had been very ill.

to accept that condition, and has taken to himself a wife who in age and form is deemed to be meet and apt for the procreation of children.

"Lastly, according to the third injunction, let us now do our part in providing for things to come. According to the desire of his most gracious Highness, let us name some person to be his heir; who, in case (*quod absit*) that he depart this life leaving no offspring lawfully begotten, may be our lawful sovereign. But let us pray Almighty God that He will graciously not leave our prince thus childless; and let us give Him thanks for that He hath preserved his Highness to us out of so many dangers; seeing that his Grace's care and efforts be directed only to the ruling his subjects in peace and charity so long as his life endures, and to the leaving us, when he shall come to die, in sure possession of these blessings."

Three weeks after Anne Boleyn's death and the king's third marriage, the chancellor dared to address the English legislature in these terms: and either he spoke like a reasonable man, which he may have done, or else he was making an exhibition of effrontery to be paralleled only by Seneca's letter to the Roman Senate after the murder of Agrippina. The legislature adopted the first interpretation, and the heads of the speech were embodied in an act of parliament. While the statute was in preparation, they made use of the interval in continuing the business of the Reformation. They abolished finally the protection of sanctuary in cases of felony, extending the new provisions even to persons in holy orders:¹ they calmed the alarms of Cranmer and the Protestants by re-asserting the extinction of the authority of the pope;² and they passed various other laws of economic and social moment. At length, on the 1st of July, in a crowded house, composed of fourteen bishops³ eighteen abbots, and thirty-nine lay peers,⁴ a bill was read a first time of such importance that I must quote at length its own most noticeable words.

The preamble commenced with reciting those provisions of the late acts which were no longer to remain in force. It then proceeded, in the form of an address to the king, to adopt and endorse the divorce and the execution. "Albeit," it ran, "most dread Sovereign Lord, that these acts were made, as it was then thought, upon a pure, perfect, and clear foundation; your Majesty's nobles and commons, thinking the said marriage

¹ 26 Hen. VIII. cap. 1.

² Including Latimer and Cranmer.

³ 26 Hen. VIII. cap. 10.

⁴ *Lords' Journals*.

then had between your Highness and the Lady Anne in their consciences to have been pure, sincere, perfect, and good, and so was reputed and taken in the realm; [yet] now of late God, of his infinite goodness, from whom no secret things can be hid, hath caused to be brought to light evident and open knowledge of certain just, true, and lawful impediments, unknown at the making of the said acts; and since that time confessed by the Lady Anne, before the Most Reverend Father in God, Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury, sitting judicially for the same; by the which it plainly appeareth that the said marriage was never good, nor consonant to the laws, but utterly void and of none effect; by reason whereof your Highness was and is lawfully divorced from the bonds of the said marriage in the life of the said Lady Anne:

“And over this, most dread Lord, albeit that your Majesty, not knowing of any lawful impediments, entered into the bonds of the said unlawful marriage, and advanced the same Lady Anne to the honour of the sovereign estate of the queen of this realm; yet she, nevertheless, inflamed with pride and carnal desires of her body, putting apart the dread of God and excellent benefits received of your Highness, confederated herself with George Boleyn, late Lord Rochfort, her natural brother, Henry Norris, Esq., Francis Weston, Esq., William Brereton, Esq., gentlemen of your privy chamber, and Mark Smeton, groom of your said privy chamber; and so being confederate, she and they most traitorously committed and perpetrated divers detestable and abominable treasons, to the fearful peril and danger of your royal person, and to the utter loss, disherison, and desolation of this realm, if God of his goodness had not in due time brought their said treasons to light; for the which, being plainly and manifestly proved, they were convict and attainted by due course and order of your common law of this realm, and have suffered according to the merits:”

In consequence of these treasons, and to lend, if possible, further weight to the sentence against her, the late queen was declared attainted by authority of parliament, as she already was by the common law. The Act then proceeded:

“And forasmuch, most gracious Sovereign, as it hath pleased your royal Majesty—(notwithstanding the great intolerable perils and occasions which your Highness hath suffered and sustained, as well by occasion of your first unlawful marriage, as by occasion of your second); at the most humble petition and intercession of us your nobles of this realm, for the ardent love

and fervent affection which your Highness beareth to the conversation of the peace and amity of the same, and of the good and quiet governance thereof, of your most excellent goodness to enter into marriage again; and [forasmuch as you] have chosen and taken a right noble, virtuous, and excellent lady, Queen Jane, to your true and lawful wife; who, for her convenient years, excellent beauty, and pureness of flesh and blood, is apt to conceive issue by your Highness; which marriage is so pure and sincere, without spot, doubt, or impediment, that the issue presented under the same, when it shall please Almighty God to send it, cannot be truly, lawfully, nor justly interrupted or disturbed of the right and title in the succession of your crown: May it now please your Majesty, for the extinguishment of all doubts, and for the pure and perfect unity of us your subjects, and all our posterities, that inasmuch as the marriage with the Lady Catherine having been invalid, the issue of that marriage is therefore illegitimate; and the marriage with the Lady Anne Boleyn having been upon true and just causes deemed of no value nor effect, the issue of this marriage is also illegitimate; the succession to the throne be now therefore determined to the issue of the marriage with Queen Jane." ¹

Thus was every step which had been taken in this great matter deliberately sanctioned ² by parliament. The criminality of the queen was considered to have been proved; the sentence upon her to have been just. The king was thanked in the name of the nation for having made haste with the marriage which has been regarded as the temptation to his crime. It is wholly impossible to dismiss facts like these with a few contemptuous phrases; and when I remember that the purity of Elizabeth is an open question among our historians, although the foulest kennels must be swept to find the filth with which to defile it; while Anne Boleyn is ruled to have been a saint, notwithstanding the solemn verdict of the Lords and Commons, the clergy, the council, judges, and juries, pronounced against her,—I feel that with such a judgment caprice has had more to do than a just appreciation of evidence.

The parliament had not yet, however, completed their work.

¹ 28 Henry VIII. cap. 7. The three last paragraphs, I need scarcely say, are a very brief epitome of very copious language.

² The archbishop's sentence of divorce was at the same time submitted to Convocation and approved by it.

It was possible, as the lord chancellor had said, that the last marriage might prove unfruitful, and this contingency was still unprovided for. The king had desired the Lords and Commons to name his successor; they replied with an act which showed the highest confidence in his patriotism; they conferred a privilege upon him unknown to the constitution, yet a power which, if honestly exercised, offered by far the happiest solution of the difficulty.

Henry had three children. The Duke of Richmond was illegitimate in the strictest sense, but he had been bred as a prince; and I have shown that, in default of a legitimate heir, the king had thought of him as his possible successor. Mary and Elizabeth were illegitimate also, according to law and form; but the illegitimacy of neither the one nor the other could be pressed to its literal consequences. They were the children, each of them, of connections which were held legal at the period of their birth. They had each received the rank of a princess; and the instincts of justice demanded that they should be allowed a place in the line of inheritance. Yet, while this feeling was distinctly entertained, it was difficult to give effect to it by statute, without a further complication of questions already too complicated, and without provoking intrigue and jealousy in other quarters. The Princess Mary also had not yet receded from the defiant attitude which she had assumed. She had lent herself to conspiracy; she had broken her allegiance, and had as yet made no submission. To her no favour could be shown while she remained in this position; and it was equally undesirable to give Elizabeth, under the altered circumstances, a permanent preference to her sister.

The parliament, therefore, with as much boldness as good sense, cut the knot, by granting Henry the power to bequeath the crown by will. He could thus advance the Duke of Richmond, if Richmond's character as a man fulfilled the promise of his youth; and he could rescue his daughters from the consequences of their mother's misfortunes or their mother's faults. It was an expression of confidence, as honourable to the country as to the king; and if we may believe, as the records say, that the tragedy of the past month had indeed grieved and saddened Henry, the generous language in which the legislature committed the future of the nation into his hands, may have something soothed his wounds.

"Forasmuch as it standeth," they said, "in the only

pleasure and will of Almighty God, whether your Majesty shall have heirs begotten and procreated from this (late) marriage, or else any lawful heirs or issues hereafter of your own body, begotten by any other lawful wife; and if such heirs should fail (as God defend), and no provision be made in your life who should rule and govern this realm, then this realm, after your transitory life, shall be destitute of a governor, or else percase [be] encumbered with a person that would count to aspire to the same, whom the subjects of this realm shall not find in their hearts to love, dread, and obediently serve¹ as their sovereign lord; and if your Grace, before it be certainly known whether ye shall have heirs or not, should suddenly name and declare any person or persons to succeed after your decease, then it is to be doubted that such person so named might happen to take great heart and courage, and by presumption fall to inobedience and rebellion; by occasion of which premises, divisions and dissensions are likely to arise and spring in this realm, to the great peril and destruction of us, your most humble and obedient servants, and all our posterities: For reformation and remedy hereof, we, your most bounden and loving subjects, most obediently acknowledging that your Majesty, prudently, victoriously, politicly, and indifferently, hath maintained this realm in peace and quietness during all the time of your most gracious reign, putting our trust and confidence in your Highness, and nothing doubting but that your Majesty, if you should fail of heirs lawfully begotten, for the love and affection that ye bear to this realm, and for avoiding all the occasions of divisions afore rehearsed, so earnestly mindeth the wealth of the same, that ye can best and most prudently provide such a governour for us and this your realm, as will succeed and follow in the just and right tract of all your proceedings, and maintain, keep, and defend the same and all the laws and ordinances established in your Grace's time for the wealth of the realm, which we all desire, do therefore most humbly beseech your Highness, that it may be enacted, for avoiding all ambiguities, doubts, and divisions, that your Highness shall have full and plenary power and authority to dispose, by your letters patent under your great seal, or else by your last will made in writing, and signed with your hand, the imperial crown of this realm, and all other the premises thereunto belonging, to such person or persons as shall please your Highness.

¹ The King of Scots: 28 Hen. VIII. c. 24.

"And we, your humble and obedient subjects, do faithfully promise to your Majesty, by one common assent, that after your decease, we, our heirs and successors, shall accept and take, love, dread, and only obey such person or persons, male or female, as your Majesty shall give your imperial crown unto; and wholly to stick to them as true and faithful subjects ought to do." ¹

¹ 28 Hen. VIII. cap. 7.

CHAPTER XII

FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC ASPECTS OF THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND

IN the sensitive condition of Europe the effect of events was felt beyond their natural consequence. The death of Catherine of Arragon led to the renewal of the war between France and the Empire. Paul III., in real or pretended reluctance to proceed to the last extremity, had for a time suspended the Bill of Deposition which he had drawn against the King of England.¹ It was idle to menace while he was unable to strike; and the two great Catholic powers had declined, when his intention was first made known to them, to furnish him with the necessary support. Francis I., who trifled, as it suited his convenience, with the court of London, the see of Rome, the Smalcaldic League, and the Divan at Constantinople, had protested against a step which would have compelled him to a definite course of action. The Emperor, so long as Solyman was unchecked upon the Danube, and Moorish corsairs swept the Mediterranean and ravaged the coasts of Italy, had shrunk from the cost and peril of a new contest.

A declaration of war, in revenge for the injuries of the divorced queen, would indeed have been welcomed with enthusiasm by the gentlemen of Spain. A London merchant, residing at Cadiz, furnished his government with unwelcome evidence of the spirit which was abroad in the Peninsula: "I have perceived," wrote Mr. Ebbes to Cromwell, "the views and manners of these countries, and favour that these Spaniards do bear towards the King's Grace and his subjects, which is very tedious in their hearts both in word and deed, with their great Popish naughty slanderous words in all parts. And truly the King's Grace hath little or no favour now. We be all taken in derision and hated as Turks, and called heretics, and Luterians, and other

¹ He told Sir Gregory Cassalis that he had been compelled by external pressure to issue threats, "*quæ tamen nunquam in animo habuit ad exitum perducere.*"—Sir Gregory Cassalis to Henry VIII.: *MS. Cotton. Vitellius*, B 14, fol. 215.

spiteful words; and they say here plainly they trust shortly to have war with England, and to set in the Bishop of Rome with all his disciples again in England."¹ The affront to a Castilian princess had wounded the national honour; the bigotry of a people to whom alone in Europe their creed remained a passion, was shocked by the religious revolution with which that affront had been attended; and the English and Irish refugees, who flocked to their harbours, found willing listeners when they presented themselves as the missionaries of a crusade.² Charles himself was withheld only by prudence from indulging the inclination of his subjects. He shared to the full their haughty sensitiveness; again and again in his private consultations with the Pope he had spoken of the revenge which he would one day exact against his uncle; and one of the best informed statesmen of the age, whose memoirs have descended to us, declares that every person who understood anything of the condition of Europe, believed assuredly that he would at last execute his threat.³

But as yet no favourable opportunity had offered itself. His arms were occupied with other enemies; the Irish rebellion had collapsed; the disaffection in England seemed unable to coalesce with sufficient firmness to encourage an invasion in its support. It was not till the close of the year 1535, when Charles returned to Naples covered with glory from his first expedition into Africa, that means and leisure for his larger object at length offered themselves. His power and his fame were now at their zenith. He had destroyed the Moslem fleet; he had wrested Tunis from the dreaded Barbarossa; he had earned the gratitude of the Catholic world by the delivery of twenty thousand Christian slaves. The last ornament might now be added to his wreath of glory, if he would hush down the tumults of heresy as he had restored peace to the waters of the Mediterranean.

With this intention Charles remained in Italy for the winter. The Pope again meditated the publication of the Bull of Deposi-

¹ Richard Ebbes to Cromwell: *MS. Cotton. Vespasian, B 7, fol. 87.*

² "There be here both Englishmen and Irishmen many that doth daily invent slander to the realm of England, with as many naughty Popish practices as they can and may do, and specially Irishmen."—*Ibid.*

³ "L'Empereur a deux fois qu'il avoit parlè audit Evesque luy avoit faict un discours long et plein de grande passion de la cruelle guerre qu'il entendoit faire contre le dit Roy d'Angleterre, au cas qu'il ne reprinst et restituast en ses honneurs la Reyne Catherine sa tante, et luy avoit declarè les moyens qu'il avoit executer vivement icelle guerre, et principalement au moyen de la bonne intelligence ce qu'il disoit avoir avec le Roy d'Ecosse."—MARTIN DU BELLAY: *Memoirs*, p. 110.

tion;¹ a circular was issued from the Vatican, copies of which were sent even to the Lutheran princes, inviting a crusade against England,² and Cardinal Granvelle was instructed to sound the disposition of Francis, and persuade his co-operation. The Emperor would be moderate in his demands; an active participation would not be required of him;³ it would be sufficient if he would forget his engagement with an excommunicated sovereign to whom promises were no longer binding, and would remain passive.

There was reason to believe that Granvelle's mission would be successful. The year preceding Charles had played off a hope of Milan as a bribe to disunite the French from England; he was ready now to make a definite promise. With the first slight inducement Francis had wavered; while again, in point of religion his conduct was more satisfactory than had been expected. He adhered in appearance to the English alliance, but he had deceived Henry's hopes that he would unite in a rupture with Rome; he had resisted all entreaties to declare the independence of the Gallican church; he had laboured to win back the Germans out of schism, partly to consolidate the French influence in Europe as opposed to the Imperial, but partly also, as he had taken pains to prove, that no doubt might be entertained of the position of France in the great question of the Reformation. He had allowed himself, indeed, as a convenience, to open negotiations for a treaty with Solymán; but the Turks, in the eyes of devout Catholics, were less obnoxious than heretics;⁴ and the scandal was obscured by an open repentance for past shortcomings, and a declaration that for the future he would eschew the crime of toleration, and show no mercy to any Protestant who might fall within his grasp. An English stranger saw Francis of France march through the streets of Paris with the princes of the blood, the queen, the princesses, the bishops, cardinals, dukes, lords, counts, the "blue

¹ Reginald Pole states that the issue was only prevented by the news of Queen Catherine's death.—Pole to Prioli: *Epistles*, vol. i. p. 442.

² SLEIDAN.

³ DU BELLAY'S *Memoirs*, p. 135.

⁴ "The Turks do not compel others to adopt their belief. He who does not attack their religion may profess among them what religion he will; he is safe. But where this pestilent seed is sown, those who do not accept, and those who openly oppose, are in equal peril."—REGINALD POLE: *De Unitate Ecclesiæ*. For the arch-enemy of England even the name of heretic was too good. "They err," says the same writer elsewhere, "who call the King of England heretic or schismatic. He has no claims to name so honourable. The heretic and schismatic acknowledge the power and providence of God. He takes God utterly away."—*Apology to Charles the Fifth*.

blood" of the nobility. They had torches, and banners, and relics of the saints, the whole machinery of the faith: and in the presence of the august assemblage six heretics were burnt at a single fire; the king gave thanks to God that he had learnt his obligations as a Christian sovereign; and, imploring the Divine forgiveness because in past years he had spared the lives of some few of these wretches whom it was his duty to have destroyed, he swore that thenceforward they should go all, as many as he could discover, to the flames.¹

Thus, therefore, good hopes were entertained of Francis; but inasmuch it was known with what a passion he had set his heart on Milan, Charles resolved not to trust too entirely to his zeal for orthodoxy; and, either through Granvelle or through his ambassadors, he signified his consent to an arrangement which would have consigned Italy conclusively to a Gallican supremacy. Sforza, the last reigning duke, whose claims had hitherto been supported by the Imperialists, had died childless in the previous October. The settlement which had been made in the treaty of Cambray had thus been rendered nugatory; and Francis desired the duchy for his second son, the Duke of Orleans, who, in right of his wife, Catherine de' Medici, would inherit also the dukedoms of Florence and Urbino. If the Emperor was acting in good faith, if he had no intention of escaping from his agreement when the observance of it should no longer be necessary, he was making no common sacrifice in acquiescing in a disposition the consequence of which to the House of Austria he so clearly foresaw.² He, however, seemed for the present to have surrendered himself to the interests of

¹ "Sire, je pense que vous avez entendu du supplication que le Roy fit, estant la present luy même allant en ordre apres les reliques me teste portant ung torche en son mayn avecques ses filz, ses evesques, et cardinaulz devant luy, et les ducs, contes, seigneurs, seneschals, esquieres, et aultres nobles gens apres luy; et la Reyne portée par deux hommes avecques la fille du Roy et ses propres. Apres tous les grosses dames et demoiselles suivants a pié. Quant tout ceci fit fayt on brûlait vi. a ung feu. Et le Roy pour sa part remercioit Dieu qu'il avoit donne cognoissance de si grand mal le priant de pardon qu'il avoit pardonne a ung on deux le en passé; et qu'il na pas este plus diligente en faysant execution; et fit apres serment que dicy en avant il les brulerait tous tous tant qu'il en trouveroit."—Andrew Baynton to Henry VIII.: *MS. State Paper Office*, temp. Henry VIII. second series, vol. iv.

² "The Duke of Orleans is married to the niece of Clement the Seventh. If I give him Milan, and he be dependent only on his father he will be altogether French . . . he will be detached wholly from the confederacy of the Empire."—Speech of Charles the Fifth in the Consistory at Rome: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 641.

the Church;¹ and, in return for the concession, Francis, who had himself advised Henry VIII. to marry Anne Boleyn,—Francis, who had declared that Henry's resistance to the Papacy was in the common interest of all Christian princes,—Francis, who had promised to make Henry's cause his own, and, three years previously, had signed a treaty, offensive and defensive, for the protection of France and England against Imperial and Papal usurpations,—sank before the temptation. He professed his willingness to join hand and heart with the Emperor in restoring unity to Christendom and crushing the Reformation. Anticipating and exceeding the requests which had been proposed to him, he volunteered his services to urge in his own person on Henry the necessity of submitting to the universal opinion of Christendom; and, to excuse or soften the effrontery of the demand, he suggested, that, in addition to the censures, a formal notice should be served upon all Christian princes and potentates, summoning them to the assistance of the Papacy to compel the King of England with the strong hand to obey the sentence of the See of Rome.² A Catholic league was now on the point of completion. The good understanding so much dreaded by English ministers, between France, the Empire, and the Papacy, seemed to be achieved. A council, the decision of which could not be doubtful, would be immediately convoked by Paul, under the protectorate of the two powers; and the Reformation would become a question no longer of argument, but of strength.

Happily, the triple cord was not yet too secure to be broken by an accident. The confederacy promised favourably till the new year. At the end of January it became known in Italy that the original cause of the English quarrel existed no longer—that Queen Catherine was no more. On the first arrival of the news there was an outburst of indignation. Stories of the circumstances of her death were spread abroad with strange and frightful details. Even Charles himself hinted his suspicions to

¹ Charles certainly did give a promise, and the date of it is fixed for the middle of the winter of 1535-6 by the protest of the French court, when it was subsequently withdrawn. "Your Majesty," Count de Vigny said, on the 18th of April, 1536, "promised a few months ago that you would give Milan to the Duke of Orleans, and not to his brother the Duke of Angoulesme."—*Ibid.*: *State Papers*, vol. vii.

² "Bien estoit d'avis quant au faict d'Angleterre, afin qu'il eust plus de couleur de presser le Roy dudit pays a se condescendre a l'opinion universelle des Chrétiens, que l'Empereur fist que notre Saint Pere sommast de ce faire tous les princes et potentats Chrétiens; et a luy assister, et donner main forte pour faire obeir le dit Roy à la sentence et determination de l'Eglise."—DU BELLAY: *Memoirs*, p. 136.

the Pope that she had been unfairly dealt with, and fears were openly expressed for the safety of the Princess Mary.¹ But, in a short time, calmer counsels began to prevail. Authentic accounts of the queen's last hours must have been received early in February from the Spanish ambassador, who was with her to the end; and as her decease gave no fresh cause for legitimate complaint, so it was possible that an embarrassing difficulty was peacefully removed. On both sides there might now, it was thought, be some relaxation without compromise of principle; an attempt at a reconciliation might at least be made before venturing on the extremity of war. Once more the Pope allowed the censures to sleep.² The Emperor, no longer compelled by honour to treat Henry as an enemy, no longer felt himself under the necessity of making sacrifices to Francis. He allowed his offer of Milan to the Duke of Orleans to melt into a proposal which would have left uninjured the Imperial influence in Italy; and Francis, who had regarded the duchy at last as his own, was furious at his disappointment, and prepared for immediate war. So slight a cause produced effects so weighty. Henry, but a few weeks before menaced with destruction, found himself at once an object of courteous solicitation from each of the late confederates. The Pope found a means of communicating to him the change in his sentiments.³ Francis, careless of all considerations beyond revenge, laboured to piece together the fragments of a friendship which his own treachery had dissolved: and Charles, through his resident at the court of London, and even with his own hand in a letter to Cromwell, condescended to request that his good brother would forget and forgive what was past. The occasion of their disagreement being removed, he desired to return to the old terms of amity. The Princess Mary might be declared legitimate, having been at least born *in bonâ fide parentum*; and as soon as this difficulty should have been overcome, he promised to use his good offices with the Pope, that, at the impending council, his good brother's present marriage should be declared valid, and the succession arranged as he desired.⁴ Finally, that he might lose no time in

¹ DU BELLAY: *Memoirs*. "Hic palam obloquuntur de morte illius ac verentur de Puellâ regiâ ne brevi sequatur." "I assure you men speak here tragice of these matters which is not to be touched by letters."—Harvel to Starkey, from Venice, Feb. 5, 1535-6: ELLIS, second series, vol. ii.

² Pole to Prioli: *Epist.* vol. i. p. 442.

³ "There hath been means made unto us by the Bishop of Rome himself for a reconciliation."—Henry VIII. to Pace: BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 476.

⁴ Henry VIII. to Pace: BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 476. LORD HERBERT, p. 196. DU BELLAY'S *Memoirs*.

reaping the benefit of his advances, he reminded Henry that the old treaties remained in force by which they had bound themselves to assist each other in the event of invasion; that he looked to his good offices and his assistance in the now imminent irruption of the French into Italy.

The English government lavished large sums as secret service money in the European courts. Though occasionally misled in reports from other quarters, they were always admirably informed by their agents at Rome.¹ Henry knew precisely the history of the late coalition against him, and the value which he might attach to these new professions. He had no intention of retracing any step which he had taken. For his separation from the rest of Christendom, Rome and the other powers were alone responsible.

Events would now work for him. He had only to stand still. To the Pope he sent no answer; but he allowed Sir Gregory Cassalis to hold an indirect commission as his representative at the Papal court. To Francis he remained indifferent. The application on the part of the Emperor had been the most elaborate, and to him his answer was the most explicit. He received the Spanish ambassador in an audience at Greenwich, and, after a formal declaration had been made of Charles's message, he replied with the terms on which he would consent to forget the events of the preceding years. The interruption of friendly relations between England and Spain was the fault wholly and entirely, he said, of the Emperor. When the crown of the Cæsars was last vacant, it had been at the disposal of himself; and he it was who had permitted the choice to fall on its present wearer. In Charles's difficulties he had lent him money: to him Charles was indebted for his power, his influence, and his fame; and, in return, he had met only with ingratitude. To remember injuries, however, was not in his nature. "We can continue our displeasure to no man," he said, "if he do once remove the cause thereof; so if he which is a prince of honour, and a personage whom we once chose and thought worthy for his virtue and qualities to be advanced, will, by his express writings, either desire us to put his doings towards us in oblivion, or by the same purge himself and declare that such things wherein we have noted unkindness at his hands have been unjustly imputed to him, we shall gladly embrace his offer touching the reconciliation." Being the injured party, he could receive no advance and treat of no conditions unless with

¹ DU BELLAY.

this necessary preliminary. Let the Emperor deal with him frankly, and he should receive a reasonable answer to all his reasonable requests.

"For the Bishop of Rome, he had not," he continued, "proceeded on so slight grounds as he would alter any one piece of his doings. In all his causes he had laid his foundation upon the laws of God, nature, and honesty, and established his works made upon the same with consent of the states of the realm in open and high court of parliament." The Bishop, however, had himself made known his desire to a better understanding with him, and he did not think it expedient that a third party should interfere.¹

The haughty answer concealed a less indifferent feeling. Henry was seriously conscious of the danger of the isolation of the country; and though he chose in words to defend his self-respect, though he saw, perhaps, in a high bearing the surest means to command the respect of others, he was anxious from his heart to resume his old relations with Spain and Flanders, so important for English commerce, and still more important for the tacit sanction of his past conduct, which would be implied in a renewed treaty with the nephew of Catherine. He directed the English resident at the Imperial court to report the manner in which his reply had been received: he desired him at the same time to lose no opportunity of impressing, both on Charles and on his ministers, the benefits which would accrue to all Christendom, as well as to themselves, if they were again on good terms.²

So matters hung uncertain through the spring. The court of Rome continued hopeful,³ although at that very time the English parliaments were debating the contents of the Black Book, and decreeing the dissolution of the smaller monasteries. Rumour was still favourable to a reconciliation, when, for the moment, all other considerations were absorbed in the breaking out of the French war.

Francis had not waited for the declaration of a change of policy on the part of Charles to collect an army. On the first hint of a difficulty he saw what was intended. Milan, after all, was not to be surrendered. His chief military successes had been gained by a suddenness of movement which approached to treachery. Instantly that he knew Charles to be hesitating, he took advantage of some trifling Border differences to open a

¹ Henry VIII. to Pace: BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 476.

² Ibid.

³ Pole to Prioli, March, 1536; *Epis. Reg. Poli*, vol. i.

quarrel; and he declared war and struck his first blow at the same moment. His troops entered Savoy, and the brilliant D'Annebault, who commanded in chief, sweeping all before him, had overrun Piedmont and had secured and fortified Turin, before a man had been raised to oppose him.

This unwelcome news found the Emperor at Naples in the middle of March. Report slightly, but only slightly, anticipating the reality, brought information at the same time of a Franco-Turkish alliance, and of the approach of a fresh Ottoman fleet; and in the first burst of anger and mortification Charles swore that this time he would not lay down his arms till either he or his rival had ceased to wear a crown.¹ Antonio de Leyva was left to collect and equip an army; Charles himself went in the first week in April to Rome, to make a public protest against the French aggression. On the seventeenth of that month, Pope, prelates, cardinals, and foreign ambassadors being all assembled in the consistory, he rose, and with his bonnet in his hand poured out in Spanish a long and passionate invective, denouncing the King of France as the enemy of God and man—the wanton and wicked disturber of the world. When peace was necessary before all things to compose schism, and to repel the Turks, Francis was breaking that peace—was bringing in the Turks—was confounding heaven and earth only for his own ambition. In the interests of Europe, even now he would give Milan to the Duke of Angoulesme; the union of the duchies was too formidable a danger to allow him to bestow it on the Duke of Orleans. This was his last concession: if it was refused, he challenged Francis to decide their differences in single combat, laying Burgundy in gage against Lombardy, the victor to have both in undisputed possession.

Explosions of passion were not unfrequent with Charles, and formed the most genuine feature in his character. His audience, however, were fluttered by his violence. His own prudence taught him the necessity of some explanation. On the following day the consistory reassembled, when, in calmer tones, he reaffirmed his accusations, and renewed his proposals.

“I am not against peace,” he said; “those who so accuse me slander me. The Pope is the common friend of myself and the King of France. Without his Holiness’s permission I should not have spoken as I spoke yesterday. I bear no personal malice. I received the sacrament before I entered your assembly, and many as are my errors and infirmities, I am not

¹ Sir Gregory Cassalis to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 641.

so bad a Christian as to communicate while in mortal sin. But a confederate of the Empire is attacked—it is my duty to defend him. The Duke of Savoy is my near relative; but were he a stranger, so long as he is one of my lieges, I must expose my life for him, as he would expose his life for me. I have challenged the King of France to mortal combat; but not in malice, not in vain bravado or appetite for glory. Wise men do not thrust themselves into desperate duels, least of all with an antagonist so strong and skilful. I offered him the alternative of this combat only if peace was impossible, that the terrible evils which menace Christendom might be thus avoided. For here I say it, and while I say it I do but claim my proper privilege as an honest sovereign, not only would I expose my person to peril, but gladly would I sacrifice my life for the welfare of the Christian world.”¹

The challenge might naturally have touched Francis, whose one sound quality was personal courage; but on this occasion the competitors had exchanged their characters. Francis had the start in the field: he had twelve thousand picked troops in Turin; the remainder of the invading force was distributed in impregnable positions over Piedmont and Savoy.² For once he determined to win a reputation for prudence as well as daring, and he left Charles to seek his remedy where he could find it. The Pope entreated, but in vain; and the campaign followed which was so disastrous to the Empire, which for a time reversed so signally the relative position of the two princes, and defeated the expectations of the keenest statesmen.

Finding himself too late, without delay and difficulty, to expel the French out of their Italian conquests, Charles, in spite of the remonstrance of his generals, and relying, as was thought, on a repetition of the treason of the Duke of Bourbon, by one or more of the Gallican nobility,³ led his army into Provence. He trusted either that he would find the country undefended, or that the French chivalry, when attacked in their homes, would, with their usual recklessness, risk a decisive battle; or, at least, that in a fertile district he would find no difficulty in procuring provisions. In each of his calculations

¹ An interesting account of these speeches and of the proceedings in the consistory is printed in the *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 646. It was probably furnished by Sir Gregory Cassalis.

² Sir Gregory Cassalis to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. vii.

³ “Omnes qui sollerti judicio ista pensitare solent, ita statuunt aliquid proditiōis in Galliā esse paratum non dissimile Ducis Borboniæ proditiōi. Non enim aliud vident quod Cæsarem illuc trahere posset.”—Sir Gregory Cassalis to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. vii.

he found himself fatally mistaken. The inhabitants of Provence had themselves destroyed their crops, and driven away their cattle. In his front, Montmorency lay intrenched at Avignon, and Francis between Lyons and Valence, in fortified camps. Time and necessity had on this occasion been enlisted as the allies of France; and with the garrison of Marseilles in his rear intercepting his supplies, unable to advance, and shut up in a country which had been left barren as an Arabian desert, the Emperor sate still in the sultry summer heats, while his army melted away from him with famine and disease. De Leyva, his ablest commander, and thirty thousand veterans, miserably perished. He escaped only from being driven into the sea by a retreat; and crept back into Italy with the broken remnant of his forces, baffled and humiliated in the only European war into which no fault of his own had plunged him.

Of the feelings with which these events were regarded by Henry, we have little evidence. No positive results followed from the first interchange of messages; but Charles so far endured the tone in which his advances had been received, that fresh communications of moderate friendliness were interchanged through Sir Gregory Cassalis at the beginning of the summer.¹ In July Henry offered his services as a mediator with the court of France both to the Emperor and to the Queen Regent of the Netherlands.² At the same time English engineers were in the French camp in Provence, perhaps as professional students of the art of war, perhaps as volunteers indirectly countenanced by the government.³ The quarrel, in reality, admitted of no solution except by the sword; and if the English felt no absolute satisfaction in seeing two powers crippling each other's strength, who, a few months previously, were in league for their own ruin, the government at least saw no reason to co-operate with either side, in a cause which did not concern them, or assist in bringing a dispute to a close which had broken out so opportunely for themselves.

¹ See Cassalis's Correspondence with Cromwell in May, 1536: *State Papers*, vol. vii.

² The clearest account which I have seen of the point in dispute between Charles V. and Francis I. is contained in a paper drawn by some English statesman apparently for Henry's use.—*Rolls House MSS.* first series, No. 757.

³ When the English army was in the Netherlands, in 1543, the Emperor especially admired the disposition of their entrenchments. Sir John Wallop, the commander-in-chief, told him he had learnt that art some years before in a campaign, of which the Emperor himself must remember something, in the south of France.

Meanwhile the probabilities of a reunion with Rome had for a moment brightened. It was stated in chapter XI. that, on the discovery of the adulteries of the queen, a panic arose among the Reformers, lest the king should regard her crime as a judgment upon the divorce, and in the sudden revulsion retrace his steps. It was seen, too, that after her punishment their fears were allayed by an act of parliament against the Papal usurpations, the most emphatic which had yet been passed, and that the country settled back into an equilibrium of permanent hostility. There are circumstances remaining to be explained, both with respect to the first alarm and to the statute by which it was dispelled.

The partial advances which had been made by the Pope had been neither accepted nor rejected, when, on the 20th of May, a courier from England brought the news of Anne's misdemeanours to Rome. The consistory would have been more than mortal if they had not been delighted. From the first they had ascribed the king's conduct to the infatuating beauty of Catherine's rival. It was she who, tigress-like, had thirsted for the blood of their martyrs, and at her shrine they had been sacrificed.¹ Her character appeared at last in its true colours; the enchantment was broken, and the abhorrence with which Henry's name had so lately been regarded was changed throughout Italy to a general feeling of pity.² The precious sheep who had been lost to the Church would now return to the fold, and the Holy Father would welcome back his erring child with paternal affection.³ This seems to have been the general expectation; unquestionably it was the expectation of the Pope himself. Paul sent again for Sir Gregory Cassalis, and after expressing his delight that God had delivered the king from his unhappy connection, he told him that he waited only

¹ Pole, in writing to Charles V., says that Henry's cruelties to the Romanists had been attributed wholly to the "Leana" at his side; and "when he had shed the blood of her whom he had fed with the blood of others," every one expected that he would have recovered his senses.—*Poli Apologia ad Carolum Quintum*.

² "The news, which some days passed were divulged of the queen's case, made a great tragedy, which was celebrated by all men's voices with admiration and great infamy to that woman to have betrayed that noble prince after such a manner, who had exalted her so high, and put himself to peril not without perturbation of all the world for her cause. But God showed Himself a rightful judge to discover such treason and iniquity. All is for the best. And I reckon this to the king's great fortune, that God would give him grace to see and touch with his hand what great enemies and traitors he lived withal."—Harvel to Starkey, from Venice, May 26: *ELLIS*, second series, vol. ii. p. 77.

³ Pole to Contarini: *Epist.* vol. i. p. 457.

for the most trifling intimation of a desire for reunion to send a nuntio to England to compose all differences and to grant everything which the king could reasonably demand.¹ Limiting, like a man of business, the advantages which he had to offer to the present world, the Pope suggested that Henry, in connection with himself, might now become the arbiter of Europe, and prescribe terms to the Empire as well as to France. For himself and for his office he said he had no ambition. The honour and the profit should alike be for England. An accession of either to the pontificate might prove its ruin.² He lauded the king's early character, his magnanimity, his generous assistance in times past to the Holy See, his devotion to the Catholic faith. Forgetting the Holy League, glossing over the Bull of Deposition as an official form which there had been no thought of enforcing, he ventured to say that for himself he had been Henry's friend from the beginning. He had urged his predecessor to permit the divorce; at Bologna he had laboured to persuade the Emperor to consent to it.³ He had sent a red hat to the Bishop of Rochester only that he might have the benefit of his assistance at the approaching council; and when he heard of his death, being surrounded by solicitations and clamours for vengeance, he had but seemed for a time to consent to measures which would never have been executed.

A warmer overture could scarcely have been conceived, and Cassalis ventured to undertake that it was made in good faith.⁴ It was true that, as Cardinal of Ravenna, Paul III. had been an advocate for Henry; and his abrupt change on his election to the see proves remarkably how the genius of the Papacy could control the inclination of the individual. Now, however, the Pope availed himself gladly of his earlier conduct, and for a month at least nothing transpired at Rome to damp his

¹ "Dicerem in ipso me adeo bonum animum reperisse ut procul dubio vestra Majestas omnia de ipso sibi polliceri possit."—Sir Gregory Cassalis to Henry VIII.: *MS. Cotton. Vitellius*, B 14, fol. 215.

² Neque ea cupiditate laborare ut suas fortunas in immensum augeat Pontificales fines propaget unde accidere posset ut ab hac . . . instituta ratione recederet.—*Ibid.* The MS. has been injured by fire—words and paragraphs are in places wanting. In the present passage it is not clear whether Paul was speaking of the Papal authority generally, or of the Pontifical states in France and Italy.

³ Causa vero matrimonii et in consistoriis et publice et privatim apud Clementem VII. se omnia quæ [potuerit pro] vestra Majestate egisse; et Bononiæ Imperatori per [horas] quatuor accurate persuadere conatum fuisse.—*Ibid.*

⁴ Sir Gregory Cassalis to Henry VIII.: *MS. Cotton. Vitellius*, B 14, fol. 215.

expectation. On the 5th of June Cardinal Campeggio wrote to the Duke of Suffolk to feel his way towards the recovery of his lost bishopric of Salisbury.¹ As late as St. John's day (June 24th) the Papal council were rejoicing in the happy prospect which seemed to be re-opening. Strange it was, that so many times in this long struggle some accident or some mistake occurred at a critical contingency to ruin hopes which promised fairly, and which, if realised, would have changed the fortunes of England. Neither the king nor the country would have surrendered their conquered liberties; the Act of Appeals would have been maintained, and, in substance if not in name, the Act of Supremacy. It is possible, however, that if at this juncture the Pope would have relinquished the high pretensions which touched the allegiance of subjects, Henry, for the sake of peace, would have acknowledged in the Bishop of Rome a titular primacy.

Many times a good cause has been ruined by the over-zeal of its friends. If there really existed such a danger, England may thank a young nobleman for its escape, who was permitted to do his country a service far different from his intentions. Once already we have seen Reginald Pole in reluctant employment in Paris, receiving opinions on the divorce. Henceforth for some years he will fill a prominent place in this history, and he must be introduced with a brief account of his life.

Reginald, second son of Margaret Plantagenet, Countess of Salisbury, was born in the year 1500. His mother, so long as the first of the Tudor princes was on the throne, remained in obscurity. The titles and estates of the Nevilles being afterwards restored to her and to her eldest son, Reginald shared the benefits of the revival of his family, and was selected by Henry VIII. for particular favour.

He was educated under the king's eye, and at the king's expense; he was pensioned and endowed, according to the fashion of the time, while still a boy, with an ecclesiastical benefice; and he was designed, should his inclination permit him, for the highest office in the English church. These general kindnesses he himself gratefully acknowledges; and he professes to have repaid Henry's care with a child's affection. He says that he loved the king for his generosity to himself and his family; that he loved him for his own high and noble qualities, his liberality, his gentleness, his piety, his princely illustrious

¹ *State Papers*, vol. vii. June 5, 1536.

nature.¹ Nor did he fail to profit by the advantages which were heaped upon him. He studied industriously at Paris and at Padua, acquiring, as he believed, all knowledge which living teachers could impart to him; and he was himself so well satisfied with the result, that at the mature age of thirty-six he could describe himself to Henry as one who, although a young man, "had long been conversant with old men; had long judged the eldest man that lived too young for him to learn wisdom from."² Many ambitious youths have experienced the same opinion of themselves; few have ventured on so confident an expression of it. But for his family's sake as much as for his own, the king continued to regard him with favour; and could he have prevailed upon himself to acquiesce in the divorce of Queen Catherine, it is possible that he would have succeeded Warham in the English primacy.

¹ Since Pole, when it suited his convenience, could represent the king's early career in very different colours, it is well to quote some specimens of his more favourable testimony. Addressing Henry himself, he says: "Quid non promittebant præclaræ illæ virtutes quæ primis annis principatus tui in te maxime elucebant. In quibus primum pietas quæ una omnium aliarum, et totius humanæ felicitatis quasi fundamentum est se proferebat. Cui adjunctæ erant quæ maxime in oculis hominum elucere solent justitia clementia liberalitas, prudentia denique tanta quanta in illâ tenerâ ætate esse potuit. Ut dixit Ezechiel de Rege Assyriorum, in paradiso Dei cedrus te pulchrior non inveniebatur."—*De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, lib. 3.

Again, writing to Charles V., after speaking of the golden splendour of Henry's early reign, his wealth, his moderation, the happiness of the people, and the circle of illustrious men who surrounded his throne, he goes on—

"Hi vero illam indolem sequebantur quam Regi Deus ipsi prius dederat cujus exemplar in Rege suo viderunt. Fuit enim indoles ejus aliquando prorsus regia. Summum in eo pietatis studium apparebat et religionis cultus; magnus amor justitiæ; non abhorrens tamen natura ut tum quidem videbatur a clementiâ."

And the time at which the supposed change took place is also marked distinctly:—

"Satanas in carne adhuc manentem naturâ hominis jam videtur spoliasse . . . suâ induisse . . . in quâ nihil præter formam videtur reliquisse quod sit hominis; . . . ne vitia quidem . . . sed cum omni virtute et donis illis Dei cœlestibus quibus cum optimis Regum comparari poterat, antequam in vicariatum Filii ejus se ingereret [præditus est] postquam illum honorem impie ambivit et arripuit, non solum virtutibus omnibus privatus est sed etiam," etc.—*Poli Apologia ad Carolum Quintum*.

It was "necessary to the position" of Romanist writers to find the promise of evil in Henry's early life, after his separation from the Papacy; and stories like those which we read in SANDERS grew like mushrooms in the compost of hatred. But it is certain that so long as he was orthodox he was regarded as a model of a Catholic prince. Cardinal Contarini laments his fall, as a fall like Lucifer's: "Qui fieri potuit per Deum immortalem," he wrote to Pole, "ut animus ille tam mitis tam mansuetus ut ad bene merendum de hominum genere a naturâ factus esse videatur sit adeo immutatus."—*Epist. Reg. Poli*, vol. ii. p. 31.

² Pole to Henry VIII.: STYKE'S *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 305

From conviction, however, or from the tendency to contradiction characteristic of a peculiar kind of talent, Pole was unable to adopt an opinion so desirable for his interests. First doubtfully, and afterwards emphatically and positively, he declared his dissent from the resolutions of parliament and convocation. He had witnessed with his own eyes the means by which the sentences had been obtained of the universities abroad. He was satisfied of the injustice of the cause. He assured himself that to proceed in it would be perilous to the realm.

His birth and the king's regard for him gave an importance to his judgment which it would not otherwise have obtained. Repeated efforts were made to gain him. His brother, Lord Montague, the Duke of Norfolk, even Henry himself, exerted all their powers of persuasion. On the death of Wolsey the archbishopric of York was held out to him as the reward of compliance.¹ Once only he wavered. He had discovered, as he imagined, a means of making a compromise with his conscience, and he went down to Whitehall to communicate his change. But, as he rather theatrically relates, when he found himself in the presence-chamber he could not utter the words which he had intended to use; either he was restrained by a Higher Power, or the sight of that Henry whom he loved so tenderly paralysed his tongue; he burst into tears, and the king left him in displeasure.² On retiring from the palace he wrote a letter of apology; accompanying it, perhaps, with the formal statement of the grounds of his opposition, which about this time he submitted to the government.³ His defence was received kindly; but, though clever, it was little to the purpose. The arguments were chiefly political; and Henry, who listened patiently to any objection on the ground of principle, paid no very high respect to the opinion of a university student in matters of state. Pole, finding his position increasingly uneasy, in 1532 applied for and obtained permission to reside for a time at Avignon. In his absence the divorce was completed; and England becoming more than ever distasteful to him, he removed to the monastery of Carpentras, and thence to his old quarters at Padua. Meantime Henry's personal kindness towards him remained undiminished. His leave of absence was indefinitely extended. His pension was continued to him; the revenues of the deanery

¹ Pole to the English Council: *Epist.* vol. i.

² *Ibid.*

³ Said by Cranmer to have been an able paper: "He suadeth with such goodly eloquence, both of words and sentences, that he is like to persuade many."—CRANMER'S *Works*, edit. JENKYNs, vol. i. p. 2.

of Exeter were regularly paid to his account; and he was exempted specially from the general condition required of all holders of ecclesiastical benefices, the swearing allegiance to the children of Queen Anne. He could himself neither have desired nor expected a larger measure of forbearance.¹

This was his position in the year 1535, when, in common with all other English noblemen and gentlemen, he was requested to send in his opinion on the authority in foreign countries claimed by the see of Rome, and at the same time to state whether his sentiments on the previous questions remained unchanged. The application was not formally made through the council. A civilian, a Mr. Starkey, a personal acquaintance, was entrusted with the commission of sending it; and Starkey took the opportunity of advising his friend to avoid the errors into which he had previously fallen. Pole's opinion on political perils, foreign invasions, internal commotions, was not wanted. "As touching the *policy* of the separation from Rome, and the divorce, and of the bringing them to effect, whether it were done well or ill," Starkey ironically wrote, "his Grace requireth no judgment of you, as of one that of such things hath no great experience as yet. Whether it should be *convenient* that there should be one head in the Church, and that the Bishop of Rome . . . set this aside . . . and in the matrimony, whether the policy he hath used therein be profitable to the realm or no . . . leave that aside . . . only shew you whether the supremacy which the Bishop of Rome has for many ages claimed be of Divine right or no . . . and if the first matrimony were to make, you would approve it then or no . . . and the cause why you would not."

Finally, as Pole once before had been tempted to give an opinion against his conscience, Starkey warned him to reply sincerely and honestly; to think first of God and the truth; and only when his conscience would permit him, to consider how he could satisfy the king. "His Grace said to me," the letter concluded, "that he would rather you were buried there than you should, for any worldly promotion or profit to yourself, dissemble with him in these great and weighty causes."²

The tone of this concluding passage teaches us not to rely too absolutely on Pole's own version of the attempts which had before been made upon his constancy. Perhaps the admonition, perhaps the irony, of his correspondent galled him. At any

¹ PHILLIPS' *Life of Cardinal Pole*.

² STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 281.

rate, the king desired the truth, and the truth he should have. Other things had been in rapid development since Pole left England. He, too, had chosen his course, and his mind had not stood still. It was not the winter of 1535, when the scheme of the crusade was first taking shape. At this juncture he sat down to comply with the king's demands. Instead of brief answers to brief questions, he composed a considerable volume; and as the several parts were completed, they were submitted to the inspection of Cardinal Contarini. Had the project of war gone forward, and had other matters remained unchanged, it is possible that Contarini would have found no fault with a composition which afterwards was regarded in the Catholic world with so much complacency. Under the actual circumstances, his language alarmed by its violence. The cardinal protested against an invective which could only irritate, and entreated Pole to reconsider what he had written.

If Pole had been honest—if he had desired only the interests of the Catholic church—he would have listened to advice; but he replied that he well knew the king's character, and that the evil had risen to its present height because no one had ventured to speak to him. Henry was not a man who could be moved by gentleness. Long ago the heaviest censures of the Church ought to have been launched upon him, and by that time he would have returned to his obedience. He said also (and this is especially to be noticed), that he was not so much addressing the king as addressing the English nation, who were impassive and hard to move. He was determined to open their eyes to the delusion into which they were betrayed, and he must go beyond the matter and beside it, and insinuate when he was unable to assert.¹

In this mood, and while the book was still unsent, he learnt with utter mortification of the relinquishment of the Emperor's

¹ "Quibus si rem persuadere velis multa præter rem sunt dicenda multa insinuanda."—*Epist. Reg. Pol.* vol. i. p. 434. And again: "Illum librum scribo non tam Regis causâ quam gregis Christi qui est universus Regni populus, quem sic deludi vix ferendum est."—*Ibid.* p. 437. I draw attention to these words, because in a subsequent defence of himself to the English Privy Council, Pole assured them that his book was a private letter privately sent to the king; that he had written as a confessor to a penitent, under the same obligations of secrecy: "Hoc genere dicendi Regem omnibus dedecorosum et probrosum reddo? Quibus tandem illustrissimi Domini? Hisne qui libellum nunquam viderunt? an his ad quos legendum dedi? Quod si hic solus sit Rex ipse, utinam ipse sibi probrosus videretur. Ad eum certe solum misi; quocum ita egi ut nemo unquam a confessionibus illi secretior esse potuisset hoc tantum spectans quod confessores ut illi tantum sua peccata ostenderem.—*Apologia ad Ang. Parl.: Epist.* vol. i. p. 181. So considerable an inconsistency might tempt a hasty person to use hard words of Pole.

intended enterprise, and the possible peaceful close of the quarrel. He had proposed to himself a far different solution. It may be that he was convinced that no such peaceful close could lead to good. It may have been, that the white rose was twining pure before his imagination, with no red blossoms intermixed, round the pillars of a regenerated church. Or, perhaps, many motives, distinct and indistinct, were working upon him. Only the fact is certain, that he might have mediated, but that he was determined rather to make mediation impossible; the broken limb should not be set in its existing posture.

In March he heard that the Pope was softening. He wrote, urgently entreating that his Holiness would commit himself in nothing till in possession of secrets which he could communicate.¹ Contarini having desired that he might show the book to Paul, he refused, under the plea that others might see it, and that he was bound to give Henry the first perusal; an honourable answer if his other insincerity allowed us to accept his word. We may believe, with no want of charity, that his real fear was, lest Paul should share the feelings of Contarini, and for the present discourage its despatch.² His letters at this time display an unveiled anxiety for immediate open hostility. His advice to the Pope was to send out his bull without more delay. He passionately deplored the change which the death of Catherine had worked upon Charles. "Alas!" he said, "that the interests of the Church should be affected by the life or death of a single woman! Oh that his Holiness could but convince the Emperor of his blessed privileges as the champion of the Catholic faith!"³ "The Emperor preferred to fight against the Turks. What were the Turks compared with the antichrist of England? What advantages would be gained if the Crescent were driven out of Europe, and England were lost? Let him strike at once while the wound was green: it would soon gangrene and mortify, and then it would be too late."

This language, under some aspects, may appear pardonable—may, perhaps, be admired as the expression of a fine enthusiasm. Those whose sympathy with sentimental emotions is restrained within the prosaic limits of ordinary law, would call it by a harder name. High treason, if it be not a virtue, is the worst of crimes; and for a subject to invite a foreign power to invade his country is the darkest form of treason. An unjust exile might be pleaded as a faint palliation—a distinct religious

¹ Pole to Prioli: *Epist.* vol. i. p. 441.

² *Ibid.* p. 442.

³ *Ibid.* p. 445.

obligation might convert the traitor into a patriot. Neither of these pretexts could be urged at the existing crisis in defence of Reginald Pole.

The book was completed in the middle of the winter; the correspondence connected with it extended through February, March, and April. In May came the news of Anne Boleyn's crimes, and the fresh impulse which I have described to the hopes of the Pope and his more moderate advisers. The expectation of a reconciliation was approaching to a certainty, and if he waited longer it might be too late. That particular time he selected to despatch his composition, and rouse again (it is idle to suppose that he was blind to the inevitable consequence) the full storm of indignation and suspicion.¹

A production, the effect of which was so considerable, requires some analysis. It shall be as brief as is consistent with the due understanding of the feeling which the book created.²

"Whether to write or not to write," commenced the youthful champion of the faith, "I cannot tell; when to write has cost the lives of so many and so noble men, and the service of God is counted for the worst of crimes. Duty urges me to write; yet what shall I write? The most faithful servant may hesitate in what language to address his sick master, when those who so far have approached his bed have forfeited their lives. Yet speak I will—I will cry in your ears as in the ears of a dead man—dead in your sins. I love you—wicked as you are, I love you. I hope for you, and may God hear my prayer. You desire the truth; I should be a traitor, then, did I conceal from you the truth. I owe my learning to your care. I will use against yourself the weapons with which yourself have armed me.

¹ Tunc statim misi cum ille e medio jam sustulisset illam quæ illi et regno totius hujus calamitatis causa existimabatur.—*Apolog. ad Carol. Quint.*

² A MS. copy of this book, apparently the original which was sent by Pole, is preserved among the *Records* in the Rolls House, scored and underlined in various places, perhaps by members of the Privy Council. A comparison of the MS. with the printed version, shows that the whole work was carefully rewritten for publication, and that various calumnies in detail, which have derived their weight from being addressed directly to the king, in what appeared to be a private communication by a credible accuser—which have, therefore, been related without hesitation by late writers as ascertained facts—are not in the first copy. So long as Pole was speaking only to the king, he prudently avoided statements which might be immediately contradicted, and confined himself to general invective. When he gave his book to the world he poured into it the indiscriminate slanders which were floating in popular rumour. See *Appendix* to the Third Volume.

"You have done no wrong, you say. Come, then, I will show you your wrong. You have changed the constitution of your country, and that is wrong. When the Church had but one head, you have made her a monster with a separate head in every realm, and that is wrong. You, of all princes (bad and impious as many of them have been), are the first who has ventured so enormous an impiety. Your flatterers have filled your heart with folly; you have made yourself abhorred among the rulers of Christendom. Do you suppose that in all these centuries the Church has failed to learn how best she should be governed? What insolence to the bride of Christ! What insolence to Christ Himself! You pretend to follow Scripture! So say all heretics, and with equal justice. No word in Scripture makes for you, except it be the single sentence, 'Honour the king.' How frail a foundation for so huge a superstructure!"

Having thus opened the indictment, he proceeded to dissect a book which had been written on the Supremacy by Dr. Sampson. Here he for some time expatiated, and having disposed of his theological antagonist, opened his parallels upon the king by a discussion of the principles of a commonwealth.

"What is a king?" he asked. "A king exists for the sake of his people; he is an outcome from Nature in labour;¹ an institution for the defence of material and temporal interests. But inasmuch there are interests beyond the temporal, so there is a jurisdiction beyond the king's. The glory of a king is the welfare of his people; and if he knew himself, and knew his office, he would lay his crown and kingdom at the feet of the priesthood, as in a haven and quiet resting-place. To priests it was said, 'Ye are gods, and ye are the children of the Most High.' Who, then, can doubt that priests are higher in dignity than kings. In human society are three grades—the people—the priesthood, the head and husband of the people—the king—who is the child, the creature, and minister of the other two."²

From these premises it followed that Henry was a traitor, a rebel against his true superior; and the first section closed with a fine rhetorical peroration.

"Oh, Henry!" he exclaimed, "more wicked than Ozias, who was smitten with leprosy when he despised the warnings of Azariah—more wicked than Saul, who slew the priests of the Lord—more wicked than Dathan and Abiram, who rose in rebellion against Aaron—what hast thou done? What! but that which is written in the Scripture of the prince of pride—

¹ Partus Naturæ laborantis.

² Populus emin regem procreat.

'I will climb up into heaven; I will set my throne above the stars; I will sit me down on the mount of the covenant; I will make myself even with the Most High.' . . . He shall send his vengeance upon thee—vengeance sudden, swift, and terrible. It shall come; nor can I pray that it may longer tarry. Rather may it come and come quickly, to the glory of his name. I will say, like Elijah, 'O Lord! they have slain thy prophets with the edge of the sword; they have thrown down thine altars; and I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away. Up, Lord, and avenge the blood of thy holy ones.' "

He now paused for a moment in his denunciation of Henry, and took up his parable against the English bishops, who had betrayed the flock of Christ, and driven them into the den of the villain king. "You thought," he said to these learned prelates, "that the Roman pontiff slept—that you might spoil him with impunity, as the robber Cacus spoiled the sleeping Hercules. Ah! but the Lord of the sheep sees you. He sees you from his throne in heaven. Not we only who are left yet alive tell, with our bleating voices, whither you have driven us; but, in louder tones than ours, the blood of those whom ye have slain, because they would not hear your hireling voices, cries out of the dust to Christ. Oh, horrible!—most horrible! No penalty which human justice could devise can reach your crimes. Men look to see when some unwonted vengeance shall light upon you, like that which fell on Korah and his company, in whose footsteps ye now are following. If the earth open her mouth and swallow you up quick, every Christian man will applaud the righteous judgment of the Almighty."

Again he passed back to the king, assailing him in pages of alternate argument and reprobation. In most modern language he asserted the responsibility of sovereigns, calling English history to witness for him in the just rebellions provoked by tyranny; and Henry, he said, had broken his coronation oath and forfeited his crown. This and similar matter occupied the second part. It had been tolerably immoderate even so far, but the main torrent had yet to flow.

The third and most important section divides itself into an address, first to the king and then to England; finally to the foreign powers—the Emperor particularly, and the Spanish army.

"I have spoken," he commenced, "but, after all, I have spoken in vain. Wine turns to vinegar in a foul vessel; and to little purpose have I poured my truth into a mind defiled with

falsehood and impurity. How shall I purify you? How, indeed! when you imagine that yourself, and not I, are in possession of the truth; when you undertake to be a teacher of others; when, forsooth, you are head of a church. But, come, listen to me. I will be your physician. I will thrust a probe into those envenomed wounds. If I cause you pain, believe that it is for your good. You do not know that you have a wound to probe. You pretend that you have only sought to do the will of God. You will say so. I know it. But, I beseech you, listen to me. Was it indeed your conscience which moved you? Not so. You lusted after a woman who was not your wife. You would make the Word of God bear false witness for you; and God's providence has permitted you to overwhelm yourself in infamy. I say, you desired to fulfil your lusts. And how, you ask, do I know this? How can I see your heart? Who but God can read those secrets? Yes, oh prince; he also knows—to whom God will reveal the heart. And I tell you that I am he to whom God has revealed yours. You will cry out against my arrogance. How should God open your heart to me? But contain yourself a little. I do not say that God has shewn more to me than he has shewn to any man who will use his understanding.¹ You think that the offspring of your harlot will be allowed to sit on the throne, that the pure blood of England will endure to be her subjects. No, truly. If you dream thus, you have little of your father's wisdom. There is not a peer in all the land who will not hold his title better than the title of a harlot's bastard. Like Cadmus, you have flung a spear among your people, and armed them for mutual slaughter. And you—you, the vilest of plunderers—a thief—a robber—you call yourself supreme head of the Church! I acquit the nation of the infamy of their consent. They have not consented. The few suffrages which you can claim have been extorted by terrour. Again, how do I know this? I who was absent from my country? Yes, I was absent. Nor have I heard one word of it from any creature. And yet so it is. I have a more sure testimony than the testimony of eyes and ears, which forbids me to be mistaken."

The witness was the death of Sir Thomas More, Bishop Fisher, and the Charterhouse monks; and the story of their martyrdom was told with some power and passion.

The remedy for all its evils rested with England. England

¹ In the printed copy the king is here accused of having intrigued with Mary Boleyn before his marriage with Anne. See *Appendix*.

must rebel. He called on it, with solemn earnestness, to consider its position: its church infected with heresy, its saints slaughtered, its laws uprooted, its succession shattered; sedition within, and foreign war imminent from without; and the single cause of these accumulated miseries a licentious tyrant. "And oh! my country," he exclaimed, "if any memory remains to you of your antient liberties, remember—remember the time when kings who ruled over you unjustly were called to account by the authority of your laws. They tell you that all is the king's. I tell you that all is the commonwealth's. You, oh! my country, are all. The king is but your servant and minister. Wipe away your tears, and turn to the Lord your God."

Of his own conduct he would give Henry fair warning. "I myself," he said, once more addressing him, "I myself shall approach the throne of your last ally, the King of France. I shall demand that he assist you no longer; that, remembering the honour of his father, with his own past fidelity to the Church of Christ, he will turn against you and strike you down. And think you that he will refuse my petition? How long dream you that God will bear with you? Your company shall be broken up. The scourge shall come down upon you like a wave. The pirates who waste the shores of the Mediterranean are less the servants of Satan than you. The pirates murder but the bodies of men. You murder their souls. Satan alone, of all created beings, may fitly be compared with you."

So far I have endeavoured to condense the voluminous language into a paraphrase, which but languidly approaches the blaze and fury of the original. Vituperation, notwithstanding, would have been of trifling consequence; and the safe exhortations of refugees, inciting domestic rebellions, the dangers of which they have no intention of sharing, are a form of treason which may usually be despised. But it is otherwise when the refugee becomes a foreign agent of his faction, and not only threatens to invite invasion, but converts his menace into act. When the pages which follow were printed, they seemed of such grave moment that they were extracted and circulated as a pamphlet in the German States. The translation, therefore, will now adhere closely to the text.

"I call to witness," he went on, "that love of my country which is engrafted in me by nature—that love of the Church which is given to me by the Son of God—did I hear that the Emperor was on the seas, on his way against Constantinople, I would know no rest till I was at his feet—I would call to him

were he in the very narrows of the Bosphorus—I would force myself into his presence—I would address him thus: ‘Cæsar,’ I would say, ‘what is this which you are doing? Whither are you leading this mighty army? Would you subdue the enemies of Christendom? Oh! then, turn, turn your sails. Go where a worse peril is threatening—where the wound is fresh, and where a foe presses more fearful far than the Turk. You count it a noble thing to break the chains of Christian captives: and noble, indeed, it is. But more glorious is it to rescue from eternal damnation the many thousand souls who are torn from the Church’s bosom, and to bring them back to the faith of Christ. What will you have gained when you have driven back the Turks, if other Turks be sprung up meanwhile amidst ourselves? What are Turks save a sect of Christians revolted from the Church? The beginning of the Turks is the beginning of all heretics. They rejected the Head which was set over them by Christ, and thus by degrees they fell away from the doctrine of Christ. What then? See you not the seed of these self-same Turks scattered at home before your doors? Would, indeed, it were so scanty that there was any difficulty in discerning its presence! Yes; you see it, sad to say, in your own Germany. The disease is there, though not as yet in its worst form. It is not yet set forth by authority. The German church may even now cast forth the seed of the adulterers, and bear again the true fruit of Catholic truth. But for England! Alas! in England that seed is sown thick and broad; and by the sovereign’s hand. It is sown, and it is quickening, and the growing blade is defended by the sword. The sword is the answer to all opponents. Nay, even silence is an equal crime. Thomas More, the wisest, the most virtuous of living men, was slain for silence. Among the monks, the more holy, the more devout they be, the greater is the peril. All lips are closed by fear of death. If these fine beginnings do not prove to you what it is to forsake the head of the Church, what other evidence do you desire? The Turks might teach you; they, too, forsook him—they, too, brought in the power of the sword; by the sword these many ages they have maintained themselves, and now the memory of their mother has perished, and too late the Church cries to her lost children to return to her.¹ Or, again, Germany may teach you.

¹ Elsewhere in his letters Pole touches on this string. If England is to be recovered, he is never weary of saying, it must be recovered at once, while the generation survives which has been educated in the Catholic faith. The poison of heresy is instilled with so deadly skill into schools and churches, into every lesson which the English youth are taught, that

How calm, how tranquil, how full of piety was Germany! How did Germany flourish while it held steadfast by the faith! How has it been torn with wars, distracted with mutinies, since it has revolted from its allegiance! There is no hope for Germany, unless, which God grant, it return to the Church—our Supreme Head. This is the Church's surest bulwark; this is the first mark for the assaults of heretics; this is the first rallying point of true Catholics; this, Cæsar, those heroic children of the Church in England have lately died to defend, choosing rather to give their naked bodies to the swords of their enemies than desert a post which was the key to the sanctuary.

“That post was stormed—those valiant soldiers were slain. What wonder, when the champion of the foemen's host was a king! Oh, misery! worse than the worst which ever yet has befallen the spouse of Christ! The poison of heresy has reached a king, and, like the Turk, he shakes his drawn sword in the face of all who resist him. If he effect now some show of moderation, it is but to gain time and strength, that he may strike the deadlier blows; and strike he will, doubt it not, if he obtain his desire. Will you then, Cæsar—you who profess that you love the faith—will you grant him that time? When the servants of Christ cry to you, in their agony, for help,—when you must aid them now, or your aid will be for ever useless,—will you turn your arms on other foes? will you be found wanting to the passionate hope of your friends, when that hope alone, that simple hope, has held them back from using their own strength and striking for themselves? Dream not, Cæsar, that all generous hearts are quenched in England—that faith and piety are dead. Judge rather those who are alive by the deaths of those who have gone to the scaffold for religion's sake. If God reserved for Himself seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal, when Ahab and his cursed Jezebel slew his prophets, think not that, in these days of greater light, our Jezebel, with all her scent for blood, has destroyed the whole defenders of the truth. There are legions in England yet unbroken who have never yet bent their knees. Go thither, and God, who has been their Saviour, will bid them rally to your banners. They are the same English, Cæsar, who, unaided,

in a few years the evil will be past cure. He was altogether right. The few years in fact were made to pass before Pole and his friends were able to interfere; and then it was too late; the prophecy was entirely verified. But, indeed, the most successful preachers of the Reformation were neither Cranmer nor Parker, Cromwell nor Burleigh, Henry nor Elizabeth, but Pole himself and the race of traitors who followed him.

and in slighter causes, have brought their princes to their judgment bar—have bidden them give account for moneys wasted to the prejudice of the commonwealth, and when they could not pass their audit, have stripped them of crown and sceptre. They are the same; and long ago, in like manner, would they have punished this king also, but that they looked to you. In you is their trust—in your noble nature, and in your zeal for God. Their cause is yours, peculiarly yours; by you they think the evil can be remedied with less hurt to England than by themselves. Wisely, therefore, they hold their hand till you shall come.

“ ‘ And you—you will leave them desolate; you turn your back upon this glorious cause; you waste yourself in a distant enterprise. Is it that your soldiers demand this unhappy preference? are your soldiers so eager to face their old eastern enemies? But what soldiers, Cæsar! Your Spaniards?—your own Spaniards? Ah! if they could hear the noble daughter of Isabella, wasted with misery, appealing in her most righteous cause to their faithful hearts! The memory of that illustrious lady, well I know, is not yet so blotted from their recollection that a daughter worthy of so great a mother could pray to them in vain. Were they told that a princess of Spain, child of the proudest sovereign of that proud empire, after twenty years of marriage, had been driven out as if she had been the bastard of some clown or huckster that had crept from her filth into the royal bed, and to make room for a vile harlot—think you they would tamely bear an injury which the basest of mankind would wash out in blood? Think you that, when there scarce breathes a man so poor of soul who would not risk his life to requite so deep an indignity, the gentlemen of Spain will hesitate to revenge the daughter of their sovereign? Shall it go out among the nations to your shame and everlasting ignominy, that Spain sits under the insult because she is faint-hearted—because she is feeble, and dares not move? It cannot be. Gather them together, Cæsar. Call your musters; I will speak to them—I will tell them that the child and grandchild of Isabella of Castile are dishonoured and robbed of their inheritance, and at the mention of that name you shall see them reverse their sails, and turn back of themselves their vessels’ prows.

“ ‘ But not for Catherine’s sake do I now stand a suitor either to you or them. For herself she desires nothing; she utters no complaint over her most unrighteous fate. You are now in the meridian of your glory, and some portion of its lustre should be

hers; yet she is miserable, and she endures her misery. Each fresh triumph of your arms entails on her some fresh oppression; but hers is no selfish sorrow for herself or for her cause. She implores you, Caesar, for the sake of England, of that England into which from her own noble stem she was once engrafted, which she loves and must love as her second country. Her private interests are nothing to her; but if it so happen that the cause of this illustrious and most dear land is so bound up in hers—that if she be neglected, England must forfeit her place among the nations—must be torn with civil distractions, and be plunged in ruin and disaster irretrievable—if the cause of religion be so joined to her cause that her desertion is the desertion of the Holy Church, that the ancient faith will be destroyed, new sects will spring up, not in that island only, which at her coming she found so true to its creed, but spreading like contagion, and bringing to confusion the entire communion of the faithful (and this is no conjectural danger: it is even now come—it is among us; already, in England, to be a friend to the old customs of the Church is fraught with deadly peril)—finally, if in this matter there be every motive which ought to affect a prince who loves the name of Christ—then—then she does entreat you not to delay longer in hastening to deliverance of the Christian commonwealth, because it happens that the common cause is her cause—because Ferdinand of Spain was her father—because Isabella was her mother—because she is your own aunt—because her most ruthless enemies have never dared to hint that in word or deed she has been unworthy of her ancestors, or of the noble realm from which she sprang.

“ ‘ She implores you, if God has given you strength to defy so powerful an enemy as the Turk, in that case, not to shrink from marching against a foe more malignant than the Turk, where the peril is nothing, and victory is sure. By the ties of blood, which are so close between you and her—by the honour of Spain which is compromised—by the welfare of Christendom, which ought to be so dear to us all—she beseeches you, on her knees, that you will permit no mean object to divert you from so holy, so grand, so brilliant an enterprise, when you can vindicate at once the honour of your family and the glory of that realm which has made you famous by so many victories, and simultaneously you can shield the Christian commonwealth from the worst disasters which have menaced it for centuries.’ ”

Here terminated this grand apostrophe, too exquisite a composition to be lost—too useful when hereafter it was to be

thrown out as a firebrand into Europe, although Catherine, happily for herself, had passed away before her chivalrous knight flung down his cartel for her. A few more words were, however, in reserve for Henry.

"I have spoken to Cæsar," he turned and said to him; "I might have spoken of all Christian princes. Do you seriously think that the King of France will refuse obedience when the Pope bids him make peace with the Emperor, and undertake your chastisement? He will obey, doubt it not; and when you are trampled down under their feet there will be more joy in Christendom than if the Turks were driven from Constantinople. What will you do? What will become of your subjects when the ports of the Continent are closed, as closed they will be, against them and their commerce? How will they loathe you then? How will you be cast out among the curses of mankind?¹ When you die you shall have no lawful burial, and what will happen to your soul I forbear to say. Man is against you; God is against you; the universe is against you. What can you look for but destruction?"

The hurricane had reached its height; it spent its fury in its last gusts. The note changed, the threats ceased, and the beauty of humiliation and promises of forgiveness to the penitent closed the volume.

Thus wrote an English subject to his sovereign, and professed afterwards to be overwhelmed with astonishment when he learnt that his behaviour was considered unbecoming. As Samuel to Saul, as Nathan to David, as Elijah to Ahab, so was Reginald Pole to Henry the Eighth, the immediate messenger of Heaven, making, however, one central and serious error; that, when between Henry the Eighth and the Papacy there lay to be contended for, on the one side, liberty, light, and justice—on the other, tyranny, darkness, and iniquity, in this great duel the Pope was God's champion, and Henry was the devil's. No pit opened its mouth to swallow the English bishops; no civil wars wrecked the prosperity of the country; no foreign power overwhelmed it; no dishonour touched its arms, except in the short interval when Catherine's daughter restored the authority of the Papacy, and Pole was Archbishop of Canterbury, and the last relic of the empire of the Plantagenets in France was lost for ever. He was pleased with his composition, however. He determined, in spite of Contarini, to send it. He expected the English council to believe him when he declared that he had no sinister

¹ These paragraphs are a condensation of five pages of invective.

intention, that he seriously imagined that a monarch who had taken the Pope by the beard and hurled him out of the kingdom, would be frightened by the lectures and threats of a petulant youth.

On the 27th of May the book was despatched to England by a messenger from Venice, and with it Pole sent two letters, one to the king, the other to his friend Cuthbert Tunstall, the Bishop of Durham. The first contained little more than the credentials of the bearer. The letter to Tunstall, as well as a verbal message by which it was accompanied, was to the effect, that the book was long, too long for the king himself to read; he desired his friend to undertake, and the king to permit him to undertake, the first perusal. The contents were to be looked upon as a secret communication between himself and his Majesty; no eye had seen more than a small portion of what he had written, and that against his own will. The addresses and apostrophes inserted here and there, which might seem at first sight questionable, were dramatically introduced only to give effect to his argument.¹ These statements seem somewhat adventurous when we think of the correspondence with Cardinal Contarini, and of Pole's assertion that he was writing less for the king than to undeceive the English people; nor do we readily acquiesce in the belief that the invocation to Charles was not intended for Charles's eyes, when the writer very soon after submitted it to those eyes, and devoted the energies of years to bring the Spaniards into England.

The messenger arrived early in June. Parliament had just met to receive the report of the queen's crimes and execution, and the king, occupied with other business, gladly complied with Pole's request, and left to others the examination of so bulky a volume. It was placed in the hands of Tunstall and Starkey. Whether Henry ever read it is not certain. If he saw it at all, it was at a later period.² At once, if any hope or thought had existed of a return to communion with the Papacy, that hope was at an end. Written from Italy, the book was accepted as representing the feeling if not dictated by the instructions of the Ultra-Catholics; and in such a mood they could only be treated as enemies. So much of its character as was necessary was laid before Henry, and, on the 14th of June, within a day or two

¹ Reginald Pole to the King, Venice, May 27. MS. *penes me*. Instructions to one whom he sent to King Henry by Reginald Pole.—BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 478.

² Starkey to Pole: STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 282.

therefore of its receipt, a courier was despatched with replies both from Henry himself, from the Bishop of Durham, Starkey, and Cromwell. If Pole expected to be regarded as a formidable person his vanity was seriously mortified. The substance of what he had written was seen to be sufficiently venomous, but the writer himself was treated rather as foolish than as wicked, and by the king was regarded with some kind of pity. Henry wrote (it would seem briefly) commanding him on his allegiance, all excuses set apart, to return to England and explain himself.¹

The summons was more fully explained by Starkey and Tunstall. The former declared that at the first reading of the book he was so much amazed and astonished that he knew not what to think except that he was in a dream.² The Bishop of Durham, on whose support Pole seems to have calculated, condescended to his arguments, and replied in formal Anglican language, that to separate from the Pope was not to separate from the unity of the Church: the Head of the Church was Christ, and unity was unity of doctrine, to which England adhered as truly as Rome: Pole had made a preposterous mistake, and it had led him into conduct which at present, if properly atoned for, might be passed over as folly, and covered and forgotten: if persevered in it would become a crime; but it was a secret so far, and if promptly repented of, should remain a secret from all eyes for ever.³ He was commanded by the government, he was implored by his friends to return to England, to make his peace in person, and entreat the king's forgiveness.

But neither his friends nor the king understood Pole's

¹ In his *Apology to Charles the Fifth* Pole says that Henry in his answer to the book said that he was not displeased with him for what he had written, but that the subject was a grave one, and that he wished to see and speak with him. He, however, remembered the fable of the fox and the sick lion, and would not show himself less sagacious than a brute. Upon this LINGARD and other writers have built a charge of treachery against Henry, and urged it, as might be expected, with much eloquent force. It did not occur to them that if Henry had really said anything so incredible, and had intended treachery, the letters of Tunstall and Starkey would have been in keeping with the king's; they would not have been allowed to betray the secret and show Pole their true opinions. Henry's letter was sent on the 14th of June; the other letters bore the same date, and went by the same post. But, indeed, the king made no mystery of his displeasure. He may have written generally, as knowing only so much of the book as others had communicated to him. That he affected not to be displeased is as absurd in itself as it is contradicted by the terms of the refusal to return, which Pole himself sent in reply.—STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 295.

² Starkey to Pole: STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 282.

³ Tunstall to Pole: *Rolls House MS.* BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 479.

character or comprehended his purpose. He was less foolish, he was more malicious than they supposed. When the letters reached him he professed to be utterly surprised at the reception which his book had met with. He regretted that the Supremacy Act made it impossible for him to comply with a command to present himself in England; but he protested so loudly that he had meant neither injury nor disrespect, he declared so emphatically that his book was a *bonâ fide* letter addressed to the king only, and written for his own eyes and no other's, that at last Henry believed him, accepted his assurance, and consented to pass over his impertinence. In July or August he was informed by Starkey "that the king took the intolerable sharpness of his writings even as they that most friendly could interpret them. He thought, as few would think, that the exaggerations, the oft-returning to the same faults, the vehement exclamations, the hot sentences, the uncomely bitings, the despiteful comparisons, and likenings, all came of error and not of evil intent. His Grace supposed his benefits not forgotten, and Pole's love towards his Highness not utterly quenched. His Majesty was one that forgave and forgot displeasure, both at once." For his own part, however, Starkey implored his friend, as he valued his country, his honour, his good name, to repent himself, as he had desired the king to repent; the king would not press him or force his conscience; if he could be brought to reconsider his conduct, he might be assured that it would not be remembered against him.¹ Simultaneously with, or soon after this letter, the Bishop of Durham wrote also by the king's order, saying that, as he objected to return, it should not be insisted on; inasmuch, however, as he had affirmed so positively that his book was a private communication, there could be no further reason for preserving any other copies of it, and if he had such copies in his possession he was called upon to prove his sincerity by burning them. On his compliance, his property, which would be forfeited under the Supremacy Act, should remain in his hands, and he was free to reside in any country which he might choose.²

Pole did not burn his book, nor was it long before he gave the government reason to regret their forbearance towards him. For the time he continued in receipt of his income, and the stir which he had created died away.

¹ Starkey to Pole: *Rolls House MS.*

² PHILLIPS' *Life of Cardinal Pole*, vol. i. p. 148. Reginald Pole to Edward VI.: *Epist. REG. POL.*

There are many scenes in human life which, as a great poet teaches us, are either sad or beautiful, cheerless or refreshing, according to the direction from which we approach them.¹ If, on a morning in spring, we behold the ridges of a fresh-turned ploughed field from their northern side, our eyes, catching only the shadowed slopes of the successive furrows, see an expanse of white, the unmelted remains of the night's hail-storm, or the hoarfrost of the dawn. We make a circuit, or we cross over and look behind us, and on the very same ground there is nothing to be seen but the rich brown soil swelling in the sunshine, warm with promise, and chequered perhaps here and there with a green blade bursting through the surface. Both images are true to the facts of nature. Both pictures are created by real objects really existing. The pleasant certainty, however, remains with us, that the winter is passing away and summer is coming; the promise of the future is not with the ice and the sleet, but with the sunshine, with gladness, and hope.

Reginald Pole has shown us the form in which England appeared to him, and to the Catholic world beyond its shores, bound under an iron yoke, and sinking down in despair and desolation. To us who have seen the golden harvests waving over her fields, his loud raving has a sound of delirium: we perceive only the happy symptoms of lengthening daylight, bringing with it once more the season of life, and health, and fertility. But there is a third aspect—and it is this which we must now endeavour to present to ourselves—of England as it appeared to its own toiling children in the hour of their trial, with its lights and shadows, its frozen prejudices and sunny gleams of faith; when day followed day, and brought no certain change, and men knew not whether night would prevail or day, or which of the two was most divine—night, with its starry firmament of saints and ceremonies, or day, with the single lustre of the Gospel sun. It is idle to try to reproduce such a time in any single shape or uniform colour. The reader must call his imagination to his aid, and endeavour, if he can, to see the same object in many shapes and many colours, to sympathise successively with those to whom the Reformation was a terror, with those to whom it was the dearest hope, and those others—the multitude—whose minds could give them no certain answer, who shifted from day to day, as the impulse of the moment swayed them.

When parliament met in June, 1536, convocation as usual

¹ WORDSWORTH'S *Excursion*, book v.

assembled with it. On Sunday, the ninth of the month, the two houses of the clergy were gathered for the opening of their session in the aisles of St. Paul's—high and low, hot and cold, brave and cowardly. The great question of the day, the Reformation of the Church, was one in which they, the spirituality of England, might be expected to bear some useful part. They had as yet borne no part but a part of obstruction. They had been compelled to sit impatiently, with tied hands, while the lay legislature prescribed their duties and shaped their laws for them. Whether they would assume a more becoming posture, was the problem which they were now met to solve. Gardiner was there, and Bonner, Tunstall, and Hilsey, Lee, Latimer, and Cranmer; mitred abbots, meditating the treason for which, before many months were passed, their quartered trunks would be rotting by the highways; earnest sacramentaries, making ready for the stake: the spirits of the two ages—the past and the future—were meeting there in fierce collision; and above them all, in his vicar-general's chair, sate Cromwell, proud and powerful, lording over the scowling crowd. The present hour was his. His enemies' turn in due time would come also.

The mass had been sung, the roll of the organ had died away. It was the time for the sermon, and Hugh Latimer, Bishop of Worcester, rose into the pulpit. Nine-tenths of all those eyes which were then fixed on him would have glistened with delight, could they have looked instead upon his burning. The whole multitude of passionate men were compelled, by a changed world, to listen quietly while he shot his bitter arrows among them.

We have heard Pole; we will now hear the heretic leader. His object on the present occasion was to tell the clergy what especially he thought of themselves; and Latimer was a plain speaker. They had no good opinion of him. His opinion of them was very bad indeed. His text was from the sixteenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel: "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light."

The race and parentage of all living things, he said, were known by their fruits. He desired by this test to try the parentage of the present convocation. They had sat—the men that he saw before him—for seven years, more or less, session after session. What measures had come from them? They were the spirituality—the teachers of the people, divinely commissioned; said to be and believed to be, children of light;

what had they done? . . . Mighty evils in those years had been swept away in England . . . but whose hands had been at the work?—was it theirs? For his part, he knew that they had burned a dead man's bones; he knew that they had done their best to burn the living man who was then speaking to them. . . What else they had done he knew not.

The end of your convocation shall show what ye are, he said, turning direct upon them; the fruit of your consultations shall show what generation ye be of. What now have ye engendered? what have ye brought forth? What fruit has come of your long and great assembly? What one thing that the people have been the better of a hair? That the people be better learned and taught now than they were in time past, should we attribute it to your industry, or to the providence of God and the foreseeing of the King's Grace? Ought we to thank you or the King's Highness? Whether stirred the other first?—you the king, that ye might preach, or he you, by his letters, that ye should preach more often? Is it unknown, think you, how both ye and your curates were in manner by violence enforced to let books be made, not by you, but by profane and lay persons? I am bold with you; but I speak to the clergy, not to the laity. I speak to your faces, not behind your backs.

If, then, they had produced no good thing, what had they produced? There was false money instead of true. There were dead images instead of a living Saviour. There was redemption purchased by money, not redemption purchased by Christ. Abundance of these things were to be found among them . . . and all those pleasant fictions which had been bred at Rome, the canonisations and expectations, the totquots and dispensations, the pardons of marvellous variety, stationaries and jubilaries, manuaries and oscularies, pedaries, and such other vanities—these had gracious reception; these were welcomed gladly in all their multiplicity. There was the ancient purgatory pickpurse—that which was suaged and cooled with a Franciscan's cowl laid upon a dead man's back, to the fourth part of his sins; that which was utterly to be spoiled, but of none other but the most prudent father the Pope, and of him as oft as he listed—a pleasant invention, and one so profitable to the feigners, that no emperor had taken more by taxes of his living subjects than those truly begotten children of the world obtained by dead men's tributes.

This was the modern Gospel—the present Catholic faith,—which the English clergy loved and taught as faithfully as their

brothers in Italy. "Ye know the proverb," the preacher continued, "'An evil crow an evil egg.' The children of this world that are known to have so evil a father the world, so evil a grandfather the devil, cannot choose but be evil—the devil being such an one as never can be unlike himself. So of Envy, his well-beloved leman, he begot the World, and left it with Discord at nurse; which World, after it came to man's estate, had of many concubines many sons. These are our holy, holy, men, that say they are dead to the world; and none are more lively to the world. God is taking account of his stewards, as though he should say, 'All good men in all places accuse your avarice, your exactions, your tyranny. I commanded you that ye should feed my sheep, and ye earnestly feed yourselves from day to day, wallowing in delights and idleness. I commanded you to teach my law; you teach your own traditions, and seek your own glory. I taught openly, that he that should hear you should hear Me; he that should despise you should despise Me. I gave you also keys—not earthly keys, but heavenly. I left my goods, that I have evermore esteemed, my Word and sacraments, to be dispensed by you. Ye have not deceived Me, but yourselves: my gifts and my benefits shall be to your greater damnation. Because ye have despised the clemency of the Master of the house, ye have deserved the severity of the Judge. Come forth; let us see an account of your stewardship.'

"And He will visit you; in his good time God will visit you. He will come; He will not tarry long. In the day in which we look not for Him, and in the hour which we do not know, He will come and will cut us in pieces, and will give us our portion with the hypocrites. He will set us, my brethren, where shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth; and here, if ye will, shall be the end of our tragedy."¹

Our glimpses into these scenes fall but fitfully. The sermon has reached us; but the audience—the five hundred fierce vindictive men who suffered under the preacher's irony—what they thought of it; with what feelings on that summer day the heated crowd scattered out of the cathedral, dispersing to their dinners among the taverns in Fleet-street and Cheapside—all this is gone, gone without a sound. Here no friendly informer comes to help us; no penitent malcontent breaks confidence or lifts the curtain. All is silent.

¹ *Sermons of Bishop Latimer*, Parker Society's edition, p. 33.

Yet, although the special acts of this body were of no mighty moment, although rarely have so many men been gathered together whose actual importance has borne so small a proportion to their estimate of themselves, yet not often, perhaps, has an assembly collected where there was such heat of passion, such malignity of hatred. For the last three years the clergy had remained torpid and half stunned, doggedly obeying the proclamations for the alterations of the service, and keeping beyond the grasp of the law. But, although too demoralised by their defeat to attempt resistance, the great body of them still detested the changes which had been forced upon their acceptance, and longed for a change which as yet they had not dared to attempt actively to compass.¹ The keener among the leaders had, however, by this time, in some degree collected themselves. They had been already watching their enemies, to strike, if they could see a vulnerable point, and had masked batteries prepared to unveil. Latimer taunted them with their inefficiency: he should find, perhaps to his cost, that their arms had not wholly lost their ancient sinew. To keep clear of suspicion of favouring heresy, in their duel with the Pope and Papal idolatries, they knew to be essential to the position of the government. When taunted with breaking the unity of the Church, the Privy Council were proud of being able to point to the purity of their doctrines; and although fighting against a stream too strong for them—contending, in fact, against Providence itself—the king, Cromwell, and Cranmer struggled resolutely to maintain this phantom stronghold, which they imagined to be the key of their defences. The moving party, on the other hand, inevitably transgressed an unreal and arbitrary boundary; and through the known sensitiveness of the king on the real presence, with the defence of which he regarded himself as especially entrusted by the supremacy, the clergy hoped to recover their advantage, and in striking heresy to reach the hated vicar-general.

The sermon was preached on the 9th of June; on the 23rd the lower house of convocation indirectly replied to it, by presenting a list of complaints on the doctrines which were spreading among the people, the open blasphemy of holy things, and the tacit or avowed sanction extended by certain members of the council to the circulation of heretical books: As an evi-

¹ In the State Paper Office and the Rolls House there are numerous "depositions" as to language used by the clergy, showing their general temper.

dence of the progress in the change of opinion, this document is one of the most remarkable which has come down to us.¹

After a preface, in which the clergy professed their sincere allegiance to the crown, the renunciation, utter and complete, of the Bishop of Rome and all his usurpations and injustices, the abuses which they were going to describe had, nevertheless, they said, created great disquiet in the realm, and required immediate attention.

To the slander of this noble realm, the disquietness of the people, and damage of Christian souls, it was commonly preached, thought, and spoke, that the sacrament of the altar was lightly to be esteemed.

Lewd persons were not afraid to say, "Why should I see the sacring of the high mass? It is anything but a piece of bread or a little pretty piece Round Robin?"

Of baptism it was said that "It was as lawful to baptise in a tub of water at home or in a ditch by the wayside as in a font of stone in the church. The water in the font was but a thing conjured."

Priests, again, were thought to have no more authority to minister sacraments than laymen. Extreme unction was not a sacrament at all, and the hallowed oil "no better than the Bishop of Rome's grease and butter." Confession, absolution, penance, were considered neither necessary nor useful. Confession "had been invented" (here a stroke was aimed at Latimer) "to have the secret knowledge of men's hearts and to pull money out of their purses." "It were enough for men each to confess his own sins to God in public." The sinner should allow himself to be a sinner and sin no more. The priest had no concern with him. Purgatory was a delusion. The soul went straight from the body to heaven or to hell. Dirige, commendations, masses, suffrages, prayers, almsdeeds, oblations done for the souls departed out of the world, were vain and profitless. All sins were put away through Christ. If there were a place of purgatory Christ was not yet born.

The Church was the congregation of good men, and prayer was of the same efficacy in the air as in a church or chapel. The building called the church was made to keep the people from the rain and wind, a place where they might assemble to hear the Word of God. Mass and matins were but a fraud.

¹ Printed in STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 260. The complaints are not exaggerated. There is not one which could not be illustrated or strengthened from depositions among the *Records*.

The saints had no power to help departed souls. To pray to them, or to burn candles before their images, was mere idolatry. The saints could not be mediators. There was one Mediator, Christ. Our Lady was but a woman, "like a bag of saffron or pepper when the spice was out."¹ It was as much available to pray to saints "as to whirl a stone against the wind." Hallowed water, hallowed bread, hallowed candles, hallowed ashes, were but vanities. Priests were like other men, and might marry and have wives like other men.²

"The saying and singing of mass, matins, and evensong, was but roaring, howling, whistling, mumming, conjuring, and juggling," and "the playing of the organs a foolish vanity." It was enough for a man to believe what was written in the Gospel—Christ's blood was shed for man's redemption, let every man believe in Christ and repent of his sins. Finally, as a special charge against Cromwell, the convocation declared that these heresies were not only taught by word of mouth, but were set out in books which were printed and published *cum privilegio*, under the apparent sanction of the crown.

Thus were the two parties face to face, and the king had either to make his choice between them, or with Cromwell's help to coerce them both into moderation. The modern reader may

¹ This, again, was intended for Latimer. The illustration was said to be his; but he denied it.

² Many of the clergy and even of the monks had already taken the permission of their own authority. Cranmer himself was said to be secretly married; and in some cases women, whom we find reported in this letter of Cromwell's visitors as concubines of priests, were really and literally their wives, and had been formally married to them. I have discovered one singular instance of this kind.

Ap Rice, writing to Cromwell in the year 1535 or 6, says:

"As we were of late at Walden, the abbot, then being a man of good learning and right sincere judgment, as I examined him alone, shewed me secretly, upon stipulation of silence, but only unto you, as our judge, that he had contracted matrimony with a certain woman secretly, having present thereat but one trusty witness; because he, not being able, as he said, to contain, though he could not be suffered by the laws of man, saw he might do it lawfully by the laws of God; and for the avoiding of more inconvenience, which before he was provoked unto, he did thus, having confidence in you that this act should not be anything prejudicial unto him."—*MS. State Paper Office*, temp. Henry VIII., second series, vol. xxxv.

Cromwell acquiesced in the reasonableness of the abbot's proceeding; he wrote to tell him "to use his remedy," but to avoid, as far as possible, creating a scandal.—*MS. ibid.* vol. xlv.

The government, however, found generally a difficulty in knowing what to resolve in such cases. The king's first declaration was a reasonable one, that all clergy who had taken wives should forfeit their orders, "and be had and reputed as lay persons to all purposes and intents."—*Royal Proclamation: WILKINS'S Concilia*, vol. iii. p. 776.

imagine that he should have left both alone, have allowed opinion to correct opinion, and truth to win its own victory. But this "remedy for controversy," so easy now, was then impossible—it would have been rejected equally by the governors and the governed. Deep in the hearts of all Englishmen in that century lay the conviction, that it was the duty of the magistrate to maintain truth, as well as to execute justice. Toleration was neither understood nor desired. The protestants clamoured against persecution, not because it was persecution, but because truth was persecuted by falsehood; and, however furiously the hostile factions exclaimed each that the truth was with them and the falsehood with their enemies, neither the one nor the other disputed the obligation of the ruling powers to support the truth in itself. So close the religious convictions of men lay to their hearts and passions, that if opinion had been left alone in their own hands, they would themselves have fought the battle of their beliefs with sharper weapons than argument. Religion to them was a thing to die for, or it was nothing. It was therefore fortunate, most fortunate, for the peace of England, that it possessed in the king a person whose mind, to a certain extent, sympathised with both parties; to whom both, so long as they were moderate, appeared to be right; to whom the extravagances of both were wrong and to be repressed. Protestant and Anglican alike might look to him with confidence—alike were obliged to fear him; neither could take him for their enemy, neither for their partisan. He possessed the peculiarity which has always distinguished practically effective men, of being advanced, as it is called, only slightly beyond his contemporaries. The giddy or imaginative genius soars on its own wings, it may be to cleave its course into the sunlight, and be the wonder of after times, but more often to fall like Icarus. The man of working ability tempers his judgment by the opinion of others. He leads his age—he bears the brunt of the battle—he wins the victory; but the motive force which bears him forward is not in himself, but in the great tidal wave of human progress. He is the guide of a great movement, not the creator of it; and he represents in his own person the highest average wisdom, combined necessarily in some measure with the mistakes and prejudices of the period to which he belongs.¹

On receiving the list of grievances, the king, then three weeks married to Jane Seymour, in the first enjoyment, as some

¹ Luther, by far the greatest man of the sixteenth century, was as rigid a believer in the real presence of Aquinas or St. Bernard.

historians require us to believe, of a guilty pleasure purchased by an infamous murder, drew up with his own hand,¹ and submitted to the two houses of convocation, a body of articles, interesting as throwing light upon his state of mind, and of deeper moment as the first authoritative statement of doctrine in the Anglican church.

By the duties of his princely office, he said, he held himself obliged, not only to see God's Word and commandment sincerely believed and reverently kept and observed, but to prevent also, as far as possible, contentions and differences of opinion. To his regret he was informed that there was no such concord in the realm as he desired, but violent disagreement, not only in matters of usage and ceremony, but in the essentials of the Christian faith. To avoid the dangerous unquietness, therefore, which might, perhaps, ensue, and also the great peril to the souls of his subjects, he had arrived at the following resolutions, to which he required and commanded obedience.

I. As concerning the faith, all things were to be held and defended as true which were comprehended in the whole body and canon of the Bible, and in the three creeds or symbols. The creeds, as well as the Scripture, were to be received as the most holy, most sure and infallible words of God, and as such, "neither to be altered nor convell'd" by any contrary opinion. Whoever refused to accept their authority "was no member of Christ, or of his spouse the Church," "but a very infidel, or heretic, or member of the devil, with whom he should be eternally damned."

II. Of sacraments generally necessary to all men there were three—baptism, penance, and the sacrament of the altar.²

[a] Of baptism the people were to be taught that it was ordained in the New Testament as a thing necessary for everlasting salvation, according to the saying of Christ, "No man can enter into the kingdom of heaven except he be born again of water and the Holy Ghost." The promises of grace attached to the sacrament of baptism appertained not only to such as had the use of reason, but also to infants, innocents, and children, who, therefore, ought to be baptised, and by baptism

¹ We were constrained to put our own pen to the book, and to conceive certain articles which were by you, the bishops, and the whole of the clergy of this our realm agreed on as Catholic.—Henry VIII. to the Bishops and Clergy: *WILKINS's Concilia*, vol. iii. p. 825.

² Whether marriage and ordination were sacraments was thus left an open question. The sacramental character of confirmation and extreme unction is *implicitly* denied.

obtain remission of sin, and be made thereby sons and children of God.

[b] Penance was instituted in the New Testament, and no man who, after baptism, had fallen into deadly sin, could, without the same, be saved. As a sacrament it consisted of three parts—contrition, confession, and amendment. Contrition was the acknowledgment of the filthiness and abomination of sin, a sorrow and inward shame for having offended God, and a certain faith, trust, and confidence in the mercy and goodness of God, whereby the penitent man must conceive certain hope that God would forgive him his sins, and repute him justified, of the number of his elect children, not for any worthiness of any merit or work done by the penitent, but for the only merits of the blood and passion of Jesus Christ. This faith was strengthened by the special application of Christ's word and promises, and therefore, to attain such certain faith, the second part of penance was necessary; that is to say, confession to a priest (if it might be had), for the absolution given by a priest was instituted of Christ, to apply the promises of God's grace to the penitent. Although Christ's death was a full, sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for which God forgave sinners their sin, and the punishment of it; yet all men ought to bring forth the fruits of penance, prayer, fasting, and almsdeeds, and make restitution in will and deed to their neighbour if they had done him any wrong, and to do all other good works of mercy and charity.

[c] In the sacrament of the altar, under the form and figure of bread and wine, was verily, substantially, and really contained and comprehended the very self-same body and blood of our Saviour Christ, which was born of the Virgin Mary, and suffered upon the cross for man's redemption; and under the same form and figure of bread and wine was corporeally, really, and in very substance exhibited, distributed, and received of all them which receive the said sacrament.

III. By justification was signified remission of sin and acceptance into the favour of God; that is to say, man's perfect renovation in Christ. Sinners obtained justification by contrition and faith, joined with charity; not as though contrition, or faith, or works proceeding therefrom, could worthily merit the said justification, for the only mercy and grace of the Father promised freely unto us for the Son's sake, and the merits of his blood and passion, were the only sufficient and worthy causes thereof; notwithstanding God required us to show good works

in fulfilling his commands, and those who lived after the flesh would be undoubtedly damned.

In these articles, which exhausted the essential doctrines of the faith, the principles of the two religions are seen linked together in connection, yet without combination, a first effort at the compromise between the old and the new which was only successfully completed in the English Prayer-book. The king next went on to those matters of custom and ritual, which, under the late system, had constituted the whole of religion, and which the Reformers were now trampling upon and insulting. Under mediæval Catholicism the cycle of life had been enveloped in symbolism; each epoch from birth to death was attended with its sacrament, each act of every hour with its special consecration: the days were all anniversaries; the weeks, the months, the seasons, as they revolved, brought with them their sacred associations and holy memories; and out of imagery and legend, simply taught and simply believed, innocent and beautiful practices had expanded as never-fading flowers by the road-side of existence.

Concerning these Henry wrote: "As to having vestments in doing God's service, such as be and have been most part used—the sprinkling of holy water to put us in remembrance of our baptism, and the blood of Christ sprinkled for our redemption on the cross—the giving of holy bread, to put us in remembrance of the sacrament of the altar, that all Christians be one body mystical in Christ, as the bread is made of many grains, and yet but one loaf—the bearing of candles on Candlemas-day, in memory of Christ the spiritual light—the giving of ashes on Ash-Wednesday, to put in remembrance every Christian man in the beginning of Lent and penance that he is but ashes and earth, and thereto shall return—the bearing of palms on Palm Sunday, in memory of the receiving of Christ into Jerusalem a little before his death, that we may have the same desire to receive Him into our hearts—creeping to the cross, and humbling ourselves on Good Friday before the cross, and there offering unto Christ before the same, and kissing of it in memory of our redemption by Christ made upon the cross—setting up the sepulture of Christ, whose body, after his death, was buried—the hallowing of the font, and other like exorcisms and benedictions by the ministers of Christ's Church, and all other like laudable customs, rites, and ceremonies,—they be not to be contemned and cast away, but to be used and continued as good and laudable, to put us in remembrance of those spiritual

things that they do signify, not suffering them to be forgot, or to be put in oblivion, but renewing them in our memories. But none of these ceremonies have power to remit sin, but only to stir and lift up our minds unto God, by whom only our sins be forgiven."

So, too, of the saints. "The saints may be honoured because they are with Christ in glory; and though Christ be the only Mediator, yet we may pray to the saints to pray for us and with us unto Almighty God; we may say to them, 'All holy angels and saints in heaven, pray for us and with us unto the Father, that for his dear Son Jesus Christ's sake we may have grace of Him and remission of our sins, with an earnest purpose to keep his holy commandments, and never to decline from the same again unto our lives' end.'"

Finally, on the great vexed question of purgatory. "Forasmuch as the due order of charity requireth, and the books of Maccabees and divers antient doctors plainly shew, that it is a very good, charitable deed to pray for souls departed; and forasmuch as such usage hath continued in the Church for many years, no man ought to be grieved with the continuance of the same. But forasmuch as the place where they be, the name thereof, and kind of pains there, be to us uncertain by Scripture, therefore this with all other things we remit unto Almighty God, unto whose mercy it is meet and convenient for us to commend them, trusting that God accepteth our prayers for them. Wherefore it is much necessary that such abuses be clearly put away, which, under the name of purgatory, hath been advanced; as to make men believe that through the Bishop of Rome's pardons men might be delivered out of purgatory and all the pains of it, or that masses said at any place or before any image might deliver them from their pain and send them straight to heaven."¹

We have now before us the stormy eloquence of Pole, the iconoclasm of Latimer, the superstitions of the complaining clergy—representing three principles struggling one against the other, and the voice of the pilot heard above the tempest. Each of these contained some element which the other needed; they were to fret and chafe till the dust was beaten off, and the grains of gold could meet and fuse.

The articles were debated in convocation, and passed because it was the king's will. No party were pleased. The Protestants

¹ *Formularies of Faith*, temp. Henry VIII., Oxford edition, 1825. Articles devised by the King's Majesty to stablish Christian quietness and unity, and to avoid contentious opinions.

exclaimed against the countenance to superstition; the Anglo-Catholics lamented the visible taint of heresy, the reduced number of the sacraments, the doubtful language upon purgatory, and the silence—dangerously significant—on the nature of the priesthood. They were signed, however, by all sides; and by Cromwell, now Lord Cromwell, lord privy seal, and not vicar-general only, but appointed vicegerent of the king in all matters ecclesiastical, they were sent round through the English counties, to be obeyed by every man at his peril.¹

The great matters being thus disposed of, the business of the session concluded with a resolution passed on the 20th of July, respecting general councils. The Pope, at the beginning of June, had issued notice of a council to be assembled, if possible, at Mantua, in the following year. The English government were contented to recognise a council called *ad locum indifferenter*, with the consent of the great powers of Europe. They would send no delegates to a petty Italian principality, where the decrees would be dictated by the Pope and the Emperor. The convocation pronounced that the Pope had gone beyond his authority: a general council could not legally be called without the consent of all Christian princes; to princes the right belonged of determining the time and place of such an assembly, of appointing the judges, of fixing the order of proceeding, and of deciding even upon the doctrines which might lawfully be allowed and defended.²

This was the last act of the year; immediately after, the convocation was prorogued. From the temper which had been displayed, it was easy to see that trouble was impending. The form which it would assume was soon to show itself.

Meanwhile, an event occurred of deeper importance than decrees of councils, convocation quarrels, and moves and counter-moves on the political chessboard; an event not to be passed by in silence, though I can only glance at it.

The agitation caused by the queen's trial had suspended hitherto the fate of the monasteries. On the dispersion of the clergy a commission was appointed by Cromwell, to put in force the act of dissolution;³ and a series of injunctions were simultaneously issued, one of which related to the articles of faith,

¹ Cromwell's patent as lord privy seal is dated the 2nd of July, 1536. On the 9th he was created Baron Cromwell, and in the same month vicegerent *in rebus ecclesiasticis*.

² The judgment of the convocation concerning general councils, July 20, 28 Henry VIII.: BURNET's *Collectanea*, p. 88.

³ BURNET's *Collectanea*, p. 89.

another to the observance of the order diminishing the number of holydays; a third forbade the extolling the special virtue of images and relics, as things which had caused much folly and superstition; the people should learn that God would be better pleased to see them providing for their families by honest labour, than by idling upon pilgrimages; if they had money to spare, they might give it in charity to the poor.

The paternoster, the apostles' creed, and the ten commandments had been lately published in English. Fathers of families, schoolmasters, and heads of households were to take care that these fundamental elements of the Christian faith should be learnt by the children and servants under their care; and the law of the land was to be better observed, which directed that every child should be brought up either to learning or to some honest occupation, "lest they should fall to sloth and idleness, and being brought after to calamity and misery, impute their ruin to those who suffered them to be brought up idly in their youth."

An order follows, of more significance: "Every parson or proprietary of every parish church within this realm shall, on this side of the feast of St. Peter ad Vincula next coming,¹ provide a book of the whole Bible, both in Latin and also in English, and lay the same in the quire, for every man that will to read and look therein; and shall discourage no man from reading any part of the Bible, but rather comfort, exhort, and admonish every man to read the same, as the very word of God and the spiritual food of man's soul; ever gently and charitably exhorting them, that using a sober and modest behaviour in the reading and inquisition of the true sense of the same, they do in nowise stiffly or eagerly contend or strive one with another about the same, but refer the declaration of those places that be in controversy to the judgment of the learned."

The publication of the English translation of the Bible, with the permission for its free use among the people—the greatest, because the purest victory so far gained by the Reformers—was at length accomplished; a few words will explain how, and by whom. Before the Reformation, two versions existed of the Bible in English—two certainly, perhaps three. One was Wicliffe's; another, based on Wicliffe's, but tinted more strongly

¹ The Feast of St. Peter ad Vincula was on the 1st of August. These injunctions could hardly have been issued before August, 1536; nor could they have been later than September. The clergy were, therefore, allowed nearly a year to provide themselves.

with the peculiar opinions of the Lollard's, followed at the beginning of the fifteenth century; and there is said to have been a third, but no copy of *this* is known to survive, and the history of it is vague.¹ The possession or the use of these translations was prohibited by the Church, under pain of death. They were extremely rare, and little read; and it was not till Luther's great movement began in Germany, and his tracts and commentaries found their way into England, that a practical determination was awakened among the people, to have before them, in their own tongue, the book on which their faith was built.

I have already described how William Tyndal felt his heart burn in him to accomplish this great work for his country; how he applied for assistance to a learned bishop; how he discovered rapidly that the assistance which he would receive from the Church authorities would be a speedy elevation to martyrdom; how he went across the Channel to Luther, and thence to Antwerp; and how he there, in the year 1526, achieved and printed the first edition of the New Testament. It was seen how copies were carried over secretly to London, and circulated in thousands by the Christian Brothers. The council threatened; the bishops anathematised. They opened subscriptions to buy up the hated and dreaded volumes. They burnt them publicly in St. Paul's. The whip, the gaol, the stake, did their worst; and their worst was nothing. The high dignitaries of the earth were fighting against Heaven, and met the success which ever attends such contests. Three editions were sold before 1530; and in that year a fresh instalment was completed. The Pentateuch was added to the New Testament; and afterwards, by Tyndal himself, or under Tyndal's eyes, the historical books, the Psalms and Prophets. At length the whole canon was translated, and published in separate portions.

All these were condemned with equal emphasis—all continued to spread. The progress of the work of propagation had, in 1531, become so considerable as to be the subject of an anxious protest to the crown from the episcopal bench. They complained of the translations as inaccurate—of unbecoming reflections on themselves in the prefaces and side notes. They required stronger powers of repression, more frequent holocausts, a more efficient inquisitorial police. In Henry's reply they found that the waters of their life were poisoned at the spring. The king, too, was infected with the madness. The king would have the Bible in English; he directed them, if the translation

¹ LEWIS'S *History of the English Bible*.

was unsound, to prepare a better translation without delay. If they had been wise in their generation they would have secured the ground when it was offered to them, and gladly complied. But the work of Reformation in England was not to be accomplished, in any one of its purer details, by the official clergy; it was to be done by volunteers from the ranks, and forced upon the Church by the secular arm. The bishops remained for two years inactive. In 1533, the king becoming more peremptory, Cranmer carried a resolution for a translation through convocation. The resolution, however, would not advance into act. The next year he brought the subject forward again; and finding his brother prelates fixed in their neglect, he divided Tyndal's work into ten parts, sending one part to each bishop to correct. The Bishop of London alone ventured an open refusal; the remainder complied in words, and did nothing.¹

Finally the king's patience was exhausted. The legitimate methods having been tried in vain, he acted on his own responsibility. Miles Coverdale, a member of the same Cambridge circle which had given birth to Cranmer, to Latimer, to Barnes, to the Scotch Wishart, silently went abroad with a licence from Cromwell; with Tyndal's help he collected and edited the scattered portions; and in 1536² there appeared in London, published *cum privilegio* and dedicated to Henry VIII., the first complete copy of the English Bible. The separate translations, still anomalously prohibited in detail, were exposed freely to sale in a single volume, under the royal sanction. The canon and text book of the new opinions—so long dreaded, so long execrated—was thenceforth to lie open in every church in England; and the clergy were ordered not to permit only, but to exhort and encourage, all men to resort to it and read.³

In this act was laid the foundation-stone on which the whole later history of England, civil as well as ecclesiastical, has been reared; the most minute incidents become interesting, connected with an event of so mighty moment.

"Caiphas," said Coverdale in the dedicatory preface, "being bishop of his year, prophesied that it was better to put Christ to death than that all the people should perish: he meaning that Christ was a heretic and a deceiver of the people, when in truth he was the Saviour of the world, sent by his Father to suffer death for man's redemption.

¹ Lewis's *History of the English Bible*.

² The printing was completed in October, 1535.

³ There is an excellent copy of this edition in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

"After the same manner the Bishop of Rome conferred on King Henry VIII. the title of Defender of the Faith, because his Highness suffered the bishops to burn God's Word, the root of faith, and to persecute the lovers and ministers of the same; where in very deed the Bishop, though he knew not what he did, prophesied that, by the righteous administration of his Grace, the faith should be so defended that God's Word, the mother of faith, should have free course through all Christendom, but especially in his own realm.

"The Bishop of Rome has studied long to keep the Bible from the people, and specially from princes, lest they should find out his tricks and his falsehoods, lest they should turn from his false obedience to the true obedience commanded by God; knowing well enough that, if the clear sun of God's Word came over the heat of the day, it would drive away the foul mist of his devilish doctrines. The Scripture was lost before the time of that noble king Josiah, as it hath also been among us unto the time of his Grace. Through the merciful goodness of God it is now found again as it was in the days of that virtuous king; and praised be the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, world without end, which so excellently hath endowed the princely heart of his Highness with such ferventness to his honour and the wealth of his subjects, that he may be compared worthily unto that noble king, that lantern among princes, who commanded straitly, as his Grace doth, that the law of God should be read and taught unto all the people.

"May it be found a general comfort to all Christian hearts—a continual subject of thankfulness, both of old and young, unto God and to his Grace, who, being our Moses, has brought us out of the old Ægypt, and from the cruel hands of our spiritual Pharaoh. Not by the thousandth part were the Jews so much bound unto King David for subduing of great Goliath as we are to his Grace for delivering us out of our old Babylonish captivity. For the which deliverance and victory I beseech our only Mediator, Jesus Christ, to make such mean with us unto his heavenly Father, that we may never be unthankful unto Him nor unto his Grace, but increase in fear of God, in obedience to the King's Highness, in love unfeigned to our neighbours, and in all virtue that cometh of God, to whom, for the defending of his blessed Word, be honour and thanks, glory and dominion, world without end."¹

Equally remarkable, and even more emphatic in the recogni-

¹ Preface to COVERDALE'S *Bible*.

tion of the share in the work borne by the king, was the frontispiece.

This was divided into four compartments:

In the first, the Almighty was seen in the clouds with outstretched arms. Two scrolls proceeded out of his mouth, to the right and the left. On the former was the verse, "the word which goeth forth from me shall not return to me empty, but shall accomplish whatsoever I will have done." The other was addressed to Henry, who was kneeling at a distance bareheaded, with his crown lying at his feet. The scroll said, "I have found me a man after my own heart, who shall fulfil all my will." Henry answered, "Thy word is a lantern unto my feet."

Immediately below the king was seated on his throne, holding in each hand a book, on which was written "the Word of God." One of these he was giving to Cranmer and another bishop, who with a group of priests were on the right of the picture, saying, "Take this and teach;" the other on the opposite side he held to Cromwell and the lay peers, and the words were, "I make a decree that, in all my kingdom, men shall tremble and fear before the living God." A third scroll, falling downwards over his feet, said alike to peer and prelate, "Judge righteous judgment. Turn not away your ear from the prayer of the poor man." The king's face was directed sternly towards the bishops, with a look which said, "Obey at last, or worse will befall you."

In the third compartment, Cranmer and Cromwell were distributing the Bible to kneeling priests and laymen; and, at the bottom, a preacher with a benevolent beautiful face was addressing a crowd from a pulpit in the open air. He was apparently commencing a sermon with the text, "I exhort therefore that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men—for kings"—and at the word "kings" the people were shouting "Vivat Rex!—Vivat Rex!" children who knew no Latin lisping "God save the King!" and, at the extreme left, at a gaol window, a prisoner was joining in the cry of delight, as if he, too, were delivered from a worse bondage.

This was the introduction of the English Bible—this the seeming acknowledgment of Henry's services. Of the translation itself, though since that time it has been many times revised and altered, we may say that it is substantially the Bible with which we are all familiar. The peculiar genius—if such a word may be permitted—which breathes through it—the mingled tenderness and majesty—the Saxon simplicity—

the preternatural grandeur—unequaled, unapproached, in the attempted improvements of modern scholars—all are here, and bear the impress of the mind of one man—William Tyndal. Lying, while engaged in that great office, under the shadow of death, the sword above his head and ready at any moment to fall, he worked, under circumstances alone perhaps truly worthy of the task which was laid upon him—his spirit, as it were divorced from the world, moved in a purer element than common air.

His work was done. He lived to see the Bible no longer carried by stealth into his country, where the possession of it was a crime, but borne in by the solemn will of the king—solemnly recognised as the word of the Most High God. And then his occupation in this earth was gone. His eyes saw the salvation for which he had longed, and he might depart to his place. He was denounced to the regent of Flanders; he was enticed by the suborned treachery of a miserable English fanatic beyond the town under whose liberties he had been secure; and with the reward which, at other times as well as those, has been held fitting by human justice for the earth's great ones, he passed away in smoke and flame to his rest.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PILGRIMAGE OF GRACE

THE Nun of Kent's conspiracy, the recent humour of convocation, the menaces of Reginald Pole, alike revealed a dangerous feeling in the country. A religious revolution in the midst of an armed population intensely interested in the event, could not be accomplished without an appeal being made at some period of its course to arms; and religion was at this time but one out of many elements of confusion. Society, within and without, from the heart of its creed to its outward organisation, was passing through a transition, and the records of the Pilgrimage of Grace cast their light far down into the structure and inmost constitution of English life.

The organic changes introduced by the parliament of 1529 had been the work of the king and the second house in the legislature; and the peers had not only seen measures pass into law which they would gladly have rejected had they dared, but their supremacy was slipping away from them; the Commons, who in times past had confined themselves to voting supplies and passing without inquiry such measures as were sent down to them, had started suddenly into new proportions, and had taken upon themselves to discuss questions sacred hitherto to convocation. The upper house had been treated in disputes which had arisen with significant disrespect; ancient and honoured customs had been discontinued among them against their desire;¹ and, constitutionally averse to change, they were

¹ "The Lord Darcy declared unto me that the custom among the Lords before that time had been that matters touching spiritual authority should always be referred unto the convocation house, and not for the parliament house: and that before this last parliament it was accustomed among the Lords, the first matter they always communed of, after the mass of the Holy Ghost, was to affirm and allow the first chapter of Magna Charta touching the rights and liberties of the church; and it was not so now. Also the Lord Darcy did say that in any matter which toucheth the prerogative of the king's crown, or any matter that touched the prejudice of the same, the custom of the Lords' house was that they should have, upon their requests, a copy of the bill of the same, to the intent that they might have their council learned to scan the same; or if it were betwixt party and party, if the bill were not prejudicial to the commonwealth. And now they could have no such copy upon their suit, or at least so readily as they were wont to have in parliament before."—Examination of Robert Aske in the Tower: *Rolls House MS. A 2*, 29, p. 197.

hurried powerless along by a force which was bearing them they knew not where. Hating heretics with true English conservatism, they found men who but a few years before would have been in the dungeons of Lollards' Tower, now high in court favour, high in office, and with seats in their own body. They had learnt to endure the presence of self-raised men when as ecclesiastics such men represented the respectable dignity of the Church; but the proud English nobles had now for the first time to tolerate the society and submit to the dictation of a lay peer who had been a tradesman's orphan and a homeless vagabond. The Reformation in their minds was associated with the exaltation of base blood, the levelling of ranks, the breaking down the old rule and order of the land. Eager to check so dangerous a movement, they had listened, some of them, to the revelations of the Nun. Fifteen great men and lords, Lord Darcy stated, had confederated secretly to force the government to change their policy;¹ and Darcy himself had been in communication for the same purpose with the Spanish ambassador, and was of course made aware of the intended invasion in the preceding winter.² The discontent extended to the county families, who shared or imitated the prejudices of their feudal leaders; and these families had again their peculiar grievances. On the suppression of the abbeys the peers obtained grants, or expected to obtain them, from the forfeited estates. The country gentlemen saw only the desecration of the familiar scenes of their daily life, the violation of the tombs of their ancestors, and the buildings themselves, the beauty of which was the admiration of foreigners who visited England, reduced to ruins.³ The abbots had been their personal friends, "the trustees for their children and the executors of their wills;"⁴ the monks had been the teachers of their children; the free tables and free lodgings in these houses had made them attractive and convenient places of resort in distant journeys; and in remote districts the trade of the neighbourhood, from the wholesale

¹ "The said Aske saith he well remembereth that the Lord Darcy told him that there were divers great men and lords which before the time of the insurrection had promised to do their best to suppress heresies and the authors and maintainers of them, and he saith they were in number fifteen persons."—*Rolls House Miscellaneous MSS.* first series, 414.

² Richard Coren to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 558.

³ "The abbeys were one of the beauties of the realm to all strangers passing through."—*Examination of Aske: Rolls House MS. A 2*, 29.

⁴ *Examination of Aske: MS. ibid.* I am glad to have discovered this most considerable evidence in favour of some at least of the superiors of the religious houses.

purchases of the corndealer to the huckstering of the wandering pedlar, had been mainly carried on within their walls.¹

"The Statute of Uses," again, an important but insufficient measure of reform, passed in the last session of parliament but one,² had created not unreasonable irritation. Previous to the modification of the feudal law in the year 1540, land was not subject to testamentary disposition; and it had been usual to evade the prohibition of direct bequest, in making provision for younger children, by leaving estates in "use," charged with payments so considerable as to amount virtually to a transfer of the property. The injustice of the common law was in this way remedied, but remedied so awkwardly as to embarrass and complicate the titles of estates beyond extrication. A "use" might be erected on a "use;" it might be extended to the descendants of those in whose behalf it first was made; it might be mortgaged, or transferred as a security to raise money. The apparent owner of a property might effect a sale, and the buyer find his purchase so encumbered as to be useless to him. The intricacies of tenure thus often passed the skill of judges to unravel;³ while, again, the lords of the fields were unable to claim their fines or fees or liveries, and the crown, in cases of treason, could not enforce its forfeitures. The Statute of Uses terminated the immediate difficulty by creating, like the recent Irish Encumbered Estates Act, parliamentary titles. All persons entitled to the use of lands were declared to be to all intents and purposes the lawful possessors, as much as if such lands had been made over to them by formal grant or conveyance. They became actual owners, with all the rights and all the liabilities of their special tenures. The embarrassed titles were in this way simplified; but now, the common law remaining as yet unchanged, the original evil returned in full force. Since a trust was equivalent to a conveyance, and land could not be bequeathed by will, the system of trusts was virtually terminated. Charges could not be created upon estates, and the landowners complained that they could no longer raise money if they wanted it; their estates must go wholly to the

¹ "Strangers and buyers of corn were also greatly refreshed, horse and man, at the abbeys; and merchandise was well carried on through their help."—Examination of Aske: *ibid*.

² 27 Henry VIII. cap. 10.

³ Among the unarranged MSS. in the State Paper Office is a long and most elaborate explanation of the evils which had been created by the system of uses. It is a paper which ought to find its place in the history of English landed tenure; and when the arrangement of these MSS. now in progress is completed, it will be accessible to any inquirer.

eldest sons; and, unless they were allowed to divide their properties by will, their younger children would be left portionless.¹

Small grievances are readily magnified in seasons of general disruption. A wicked spirit in the person of Cromwell was said to rule the king, and everything which he did was evil, and every evil of the commonwealth was due to his malignant influence.

The discontent of the noblemen and gentlemen would in itself have been formidable. Their armed retinues were considerable. The constitutional power of the counties was in their hands. But the commons, again, had their own grounds of complaint, for the most part just, though arising from causes over which the government had no control, from social changes deeper than the Reformation itself. In early times each petty district in England had been self-supporting, raising its own corn, feeding its own cattle, producing by women's hands in the cottages and farmhouses its own manufactures. There were few or no large roads, no canals, small means of transport of any kind, and from this condition of things had arisen the laws which we call shortsighted, against engrossers of grain. Wealthy speculators, watching their opportunity, might buy up the produce not immediately needed, of an abundant harvest, and when the stock which was left was exhausted, they could make their own market, unchecked by a danger of competition. In time no doubt the mischief would have righted itself, but only with the assistance of a coercive police which had no existence, who would have held down the people while they learnt their lesson by starvation. The habits of a great nation could only change slowly. Each estate or each township for the most part grew its own food, and (the average of seasons compensating each other) food adequate for the mouths dependent upon it.

The development of trade at the close of the fifteenth century gave the first shock to the system. The demand for English

¹ "Masters, there is a statute made whereby all persons be restrained to make their will upon their lands; for now the eldest son must have all his father's lands; and no person, to the payment of his debts, neither to the advancement of his daughters' marriages, can do nothing with their lands, nor cannot give to his youngest son any lands."—Speech of Mr. Sheriff Dymock, at Horncastle: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 29.

"They want the Statute of Uses qualified, that a man be allowed to bequeath part of his lands by will. It will invade the old accustomed law in many things."—Examination of Aske: *MS.* *ibid.* "Divers things should be reformed, and especially the Act of Uses. Younger brothers would none of that in no wise."—Earl of Oxford to Cromwell: *Miscellaneous MSS.* State Paper Office, second series, vol. i.

wool in Flanders had increased largely, and holders of property found they could make their own advantage by turning their corn-land into pasture, breaking up the farms, enclosing the commons, and becoming graziers on a gigantic scale.

I have described in the first chapter of this work the manner in which the Tudor sovereigns had attempted to check this tendency, but interest had so far proved too strong for legislation. The statutes prohibiting enclosures had remained, especially in the northern counties, unenforced; and the small farmers and petty copyholders, hitherto thriving and independent, found themselves at once turned out of their farms and deprived of the resource of the commons. They had suffered frightfully, and they saw no reason for their sufferings. From the Trent northward a deep and angry spirit of discontent had arisen which could be stirred easily into mutiny.¹

¹ The depositions of prisoners taken after the rebellion are full of evidence on this point. George Gisborne says: "We were in mind and will to meet for certain causes, the which concerned the living of the poor people and commons, the which they say be sore oppressed by gentlemen, because their livings is taken away."—*Rolls House MS.* miscellaneous, first series, 132.

Wm. Stapleton says: "Among the causes of the insurrection were pulling down of villages and farms, raising of rents, enclosures, intakes of the commons, worshipful men taking yeomen's offices, that is, becoming dealers in farm produce."—*Rolls House MS.*

I am tempted to add a petition sent from one of the discontented districts to the crown, which betrays great ignorance of political economy, although it exhibits also a clear understanding both of the petitioners' sufferings and of the immediate causes of those sufferings.

"Please it your noble Grace to consider the great indigence and scarcity of all manner of victual necessary to your subjects within this realm of England, which doth grow daily more and more, by reason of the great and covetous misuses of the farms within this your realm; which misuses and the inconveniences thereof hath not only been begun and risen by divers gentlemen of the same your realm, but also by divers and many merchant adventurers, clothmakers, goldsmiths, butchers, tanners, and other artificers and unreasonable covetous persons, which doth encroach daily many farms more than they can occupy in tilth of corn; ten, twelve, fourteen, or sixteen farms in one man's hands at once; when in time past there hath been in every farm of them a good house kept, and in some of them three, four, five, or six ploughs kept and daily occupied, to the great comfort and relief of your subjects of your realm, poor and rich. For when every man was contented with one farm, and occupied that well, there was plenty and reasonable price of everything that belonged to man's sustenance by reason of tillage; forasmuch as every acre of land tilled and ploughed bore the straw and the chaff besides the corn, able and sufficient with the help of the shakke in the stubbe to succour and feed as many great beasts (as horses, oxen, and kine) as the land would keep; and further, by reason of the hinderflight of the crops and seeds tried out in cleansing, winnowing, and sifting the corn, there was brought up at every barn-door hens, capons, geese, ducks, swine, and other poultry, to the great comfort of your people. And now, by reason of so many farms engrossed in one man's hands, which cannot till them, the ploughs be decayed, and the farmhouses and other dwellinghouses; so that when

Nor were these the only grievances of the northern populace. The Yorkshire knights, squires, sheriffs, and justices of the peace, intent, as we see, on their own interests, had been overbearing and tyrannical in their offices. The Abbot of York, interceding with Cromwell in behalf of some poor man who had been needlessly arrested and troubled, declared that "there was such a company of wilful gentlemen within Yorkshire as he thought there were not in all England besides,"¹ and Cromwell in consequence had "roughly handled the grand jury." Courts of arbitration had sate from immemorial time in the northern baronies where disputes between landlords and tenants had been equitably and cheaply adjusted. The growing inequality of fortunes had broken through this useful custom. Small farmers and petty leaseholders now found themselves sued or compelled to sue in the courts at Westminster, and the expenses of a journey to London, or of the employment of London advocates, placed them virtually at the mercy of their landlords. Thus the law itself had been made an instrument of oppression, and the better order of gentlemen, who would have seen justice enforced, had they been able, found themselves assailed daily with "piteous complaints" which they had no power to satisfy.² The occupation of the council with the larger questions of the Church, had left them too little leisure to attend to these disorders. Cromwell's occasional and abrupt interference had created irritation, but no improvement; and mischiefs of all kinds had grown unheeded till the summer of 1536, when a fresh list of grievances, some real, some imaginary, brought the crisis to a head.

The convocation of York, composed of rougher materials than the representatives of the southern counties, had acquiesced but tardily in the measures of the late years. Abuses of all kinds instinctively sympathise, and the clergy of the north, who were the most ignorant in England, and the laity whose social irregularities were the greatest, united resolutely in their attachment to the Pope, were most alarmed at the pro-

there was in a town twenty or thirty dwelling-houses they be now decayed, ploughs and all the people clean gone, and the churches down, and no more parishioners in many parishes, but a neatherd and a shepherd instead of three score or four score persons."—*Rolls House MS.* miscellaneous, second series, 854.

¹ Abbot of York to Cromwell.—*Miscellaneous MS.* State Paper Office, second series, vol. lii.

² See a very remarkable letter of Sir William Parr to Cromwell, dated April 8, 1536, a few months only before the outbreak of the rebellion; *Miscellaneous MS.* State Paper Office, second series, vol. xxxi.

grass of heresy, and most anxious for a reaction. The deciding act against Rome and the king's articles of religion struck down the hopes which had been excited there and elsewhere by the disgrace of Queen Anne. Men saw the Papacy finally abandoned, they saw heresy encouraged, and they were proportionately disappointed and enraged.

At this moment three commissions were issued by the crown, each of which would have tried the patience of the people, if conducted with the greatest prudence, and at the happiest opportunity.

The second portion of the subsidy (an income-tax of two and a half per cent. on all incomes above twenty pounds a year), which had been voted in the autumn of 1534, had fallen due. The money had been required for the Irish war, and the disaffected party in England had wished well to the insurgents, so that the collectors found the greatest difficulty either in enforcing the tax, or obtaining correct accounts of the properties on which it was to be paid.

Simultaneously Legh and Layton, the two most active and most unpopular of the monastic visitors, were sent to Yorkshire to carry out the Act of Suppression. Others went into Lincolnshire, others to Cheshire and Lancashire, while a third set carried round the injunctions of Cromwell to the clergy, with directions further to summon before them every individual parish priest, to examine into his character, his habits and qualifications, and eject summarily all inefficient persons from their offices and emoluments.

The dissolution of the religious houses commenced in the midst of an ominous and sullen silence. The act extended only to houses whose incomes were under two hundred pounds a year, and among these the commissioners were to use their discretion. They were to visit every abbey and priory, to examine the books, examine the monks—when the income fell short, or when the character of the house was vicious, to eject the occupants, and place the lands and farm-buildings in the hands of lay tenants for the crown. The discharge of an unpopular office, however conducted, would have exposed those who undertook it to great odium. It is likely that those who did undertake it were men who felt bitterly on the monastic vices, and did their work with little scruple or sympathy. Legh and Layton were accused subsequently of having borne themselves with overbearing insolence; they were said also to have taken bribes, and where bribes were not offered, to have

extorted them from the houses which they spared. That they went through their business roughly is exceedingly probable; whether needlessly so must not be concluded from the report of persons to whom their entire occupation was sacrilege. That they received money is evident from their own reports to the government; but it is evident also that they did not attempt to conceal that they received it. When the revenues of the crown were irregular and small, the salaries even of ministers of state were derived in great measure from fees and presents; the visitors of the monasteries, travelling with large retinues, were expected to make their duties self-supporting, to inflict themselves as guests on the houses to which they went, and to pay their own and their servants' "wages" from the funds of the establishments. Sums of money would be frequently offered them in lieu of a painful hospitality; and whether they took unfair advantage of their opportunities for extortion, or whether they exercised a proper moderation, cannot be concluded from the mere fact that there was a clamour against them. But beyond doubt their other proceedings were both rash and blameable. Their servants with the hot puritan blood already in their veins, trained in the exposure of the impostures and profligacies of which they had seen so many, scorning and hating the whole monastic race, had paraded their contempt before the world; they had ridden along the highways, decked in the spoils of the desecrated chapels, with copes for doublets, tunics for saddle-cloths,¹ and the silver relic-cases hammered into sheaths for their daggers.² They had been directed to enforce an abrogation of the superfluous holydays; they had shown such excessive zeal that in some places common markets had been held under their direction on Sundays.³

Scenes like these working upon tempers already inflamed, gave point to discontent. Heresy, that word of dread and horror to English ears, rang from lip to lip. Their hated enemy was at the people's doors, and their other sufferings were the just vengeance of an angry God.⁴ Imagination, as usual, hastened to assist and expand the nucleus of truth. Cromwell had formed the excellent design, which two years later he carried into effect, of instituting parish registers. A

¹ It was said that the visitors' servants had made apparel, doublets, yea, even saddlecloths, of the churches' vestments.—Examination of John Dakyn: *Rolls House MS.* miscellaneous, first series, 402.

² *Rolls House MS.*

³ *Ibid.* miscellaneous, first series, 402.

⁴ Aske's Deposition: *Rolls House MS.*

report of his intention had gone abroad, and mingling with the irritating inquiries of the subsidy commissioners into the value of men's properties, gave rise to a rumour that a fine was to be paid to the crown on every wedding, funeral, or christening; that a tax would be levied on every head of cattle, or the cattle should be forfeited; "that no man should eat in his house white meat, pig, goose, nor capon, but that he should pay certain dues to the King's Grace."

In the desecration of the abbey chapels and altar-plate a design was imagined against all religion. The clergy were to be despoiled; the parish churches pulled down, one only to be left for every seven or eight miles; the church plate to be confiscated, and "chalices of tin" supplied for the priest to sing with.¹

Every element necessary for a great revolt was thus in motion—wounded superstition, real suffering, caused by real injustice, with their attendant train of phantoms. The clergy in the north were disaffected to a man;² the people were in the angry humour which looks eagerly for an enemy, and flies at the first which seems to offer. If to a spirit of revolt there had been added a unity of purpose, the results would have been far other than they were. Happily, the discontents of the nobility, the gentlemen, the clergy, the commons, were different, and in many respects, opposite; and although, in the first heat of the commotion, a combination threatened to be possible, jealousy and suspicion rapidly accomplished the work of disintegration. The noble lords were in the interest of Pole, of European Catholicism, the Empire, and the Papacy; the country gentlemen desired only the quiet enjoyment of a right to do as they would with their own, and the quiet maintenance of a Church which was too corrupt to interfere with them. The working people had a just cause, though disguised by folly; but all true sufferers soon learnt, that in rising against the government, they had mistaken their best friends for foes.

It was Michaelmas then, in the year 1536. Towards the fall of the summer, clergy from the southern counties had been flitting northward, and on their return had talked mysteriously to their parishioners of impending insurrections, in which honest

¹ Depositions on the Rebellion, *passim*, among the MSS. in the State Paper Office and the Rolls House.

² George Lumley, the eldest son of Lord Lumley, said in his evidence that there was not a spiritual man in the whole north of England who had not assisted the rebellion with arms or money.—*Rolls House MS.*

men would bear their part.¹ In Yorkshire and Lincolnshire the stories of the intended destruction of parish churches had been vociferously circulated; and Lord Hussey, at his castle at Sleaford, had been heard to say to one of the gentlemen of the county, that "the world would never mend until they fought for it."² September passed away; at the end of the month, the nunnery of Legbourne, near Louth, was suppressed by the visitors, and two servants of Cromwell were left in the house, to complete the dissolution. On Monday, the 2nd of October, Heneage, one of the examiners under the clerical commission, was coming, with the chancellor of the Bishop of Lincoln, into Louth itself, and the clergy of the neighbourhood were to appear and submit themselves to inspection.

The evening before being Sunday, a knot of people gathered on the green in the town. They had the great silver cross belonging to the parish with them; and as a crowd collected about them, a voice cried, "Masters, let us follow the cross; God knows whether ever we shall follow it hereafter or nay." They formed in procession, and went round the streets; and after vespers, a party, headed "by one Nicholas Melton, who, being a shoemaker, was called Captain Cobler," appeared at the doors of the church, and required the churchwardens to give them the key of the jewel chamber. The chancellor, they said, was coming the next morning, and intended to seize the plate. The churchwardens hesitating, the keys were taken by force. The chests were opened, the crosses, chalices, and candlesticks "were shewed openly in the sight of every man," and then, lest they should be stolen in the night, an armed watch kept guard till daybreak in the church aisles.

At nine o'clock on Monday morning Heneage entered the town, with a single servant. The chancellor was ill, and could not attend. As he rode in, the alarm-bell pealed out from Louth Tower. The inhabitants swarmed into the streets with bills and staves; "the stir and the noise arising hideous." The commissioner, in panic at the disturbance, hurried into the church for sanctuary; but the protection was not allowed to

¹ The parish priest of Wyley, in Essex, had been absent for three weeks in the north, in the month of August, and on returning, about the 2nd of September, said to one of his villagers, Thomas Rogers, "There shall be business shortly in the north, and I trust to help and strengthen my countrymen with ten thousand such as I am myself; and I shall be one of the worst of them all. The king shall not reign long."—Confession of Thomas Rogers: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xxx. p. 112.

² Deposition of Thomas Brian: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 29.

avail him. He was brought out into the market-place, a sword was held to his breast, and he was sworn at an extemporised tribunal to be true to the commons, upon pain of death. "Let us swear! let us all swear!" was then the cry. A general oath was drawn. The townsmen swore—all strangers resident swore—they would be faithful to the king, the commonwealth, and to Holy Church.

In the heat of the enthusiasm appeared the registrar of the diocese, who had followed Heneage with his books, in which was enrolled Cromwell's commission. Instantly clutched, he was dragged to the market-cross. A priest was mounted on the stone steps, and commanded to read the commission aloud. He began; but the "hideous clamour" drowned his voice. The crowd, climbing on his shoulders, to overlook the pages, bore him down. He flung the book among the mob, and it was torn leaf from leaf, and burnt upon the spot. The registrar barely escaped with his life: he was rescued by friends, and hurried beyond the gates.

Meanwhile, a party of the rioters had gone out to Legbourne, and returned, bringing Cromwell's servants, who were first set in the stocks, and thrust afterwards into the town gaol.

So passed Monday. The next morning, early, the common bell was again ringing. Other commissioners were reported to be at Castre, a few miles distant; and Melton the shoemaker, and "one great James," a tailor, with a volunteer army of horse and foot, harnessed and unharnessed, set out to seize them. The alarm had spread; the people from the neighbouring villages joined them as they passed, or had already risen and were in marching order. At Castre they found the commissioners fled; but a thousand horse were waiting for them, and the number every moment increasing. Whole parishes marched in, headed by their clergy. A rendezvous was fixed at Rotherwell; and at Rotherwell, on that day, or the next, besides the commons, "there were priests and monks" (the latter fresh ejected from their monasteries—pensioned, but furious) "to the number of seven or eight hundred."¹ Some were "bidding their bedes," and praying for the Pope and cardinals; some were in full harness, or armed with such weapons as they could find: all were urging on the people. They had, as yet, no plans. What

¹ We find curious and humorous instances of monastic rage at this time. One monk was seen following a plough, and cursing his day that he should have to work for his bread. Another, a Welshman, "wished he had the king on Snowdon, that he might souse his head against the stones."—Depositions on the Rebellion: *Rolls House MS.*

would the gentlemen do? was the question. "Kill the gentlemen," the priests cried; "if they will not join us, they shall all be hanged."¹ This difficulty was soon settled. They were swept up from their halls, or wherever they could be found. The oath was offered them, with the alternative of instant death; and they swore against their will, as all afterwards pretended, and as some perhaps sincerely felt; but when the oath was once taken, they joined with a hearty unanimity, and brought in with them their own armed retainers, and the stores from their houses.² Sir Edward Madyson came in, Sir Thomas Tyrwhit and Sir William Ascue. Lord Borough, who was in Ascue's company when the insurgents caught him, rode for his life, and escaped. One of his servants was overtaken in the pursuit, was wounded mortally, and shriven on the field.

So matters went at Louth and Castre. On Tuesday, October 3rd, the country rose at Horncastle, in the same manner, only on an even larger scale. On a heath in that neighbourhood there was "a great muster;" the gentlemen of the county came in, in large numbers, with "Mr. Dymmock," the sheriff, at their head. Dr. Mackarel, the Abbot of Barlings, was present, with his canons, in full armour; from the abbey came a waggon-load of victuals; oxen and sheep were driven in from the neighbourhood; and a retainer of the house carried a banner, on which was worked a plough, a chalice and a host, a horn, and the five wounds of Christ.³ The sheriff, with his brother, rode up and

¹ Sir Robert Dighton and Sir Edward Dymmock said they heard many of the priests cry, "Kill the gentlemen." The parson of Cowbridge said that the lords of the council were false harlots; and the worst was Cromwell. "The vicar of Haynton, having a great club in his hand, said that if he had Cromwell there he would beat out his guts." "Robert Brown-white, one of the parsons of Nether Teynton, was with bow and arrows, sword and buckler by his side, and sallet on his head; and when he was demanded how he did, he said, 'None so well;' and said it was the best world that ever he did see." My story, so far, is taken from the Miscellaneous Depositions, *Rolls MS. A 2, 28*; from the Examination of William Moreland, *MS. A 2, 29*; and from the Confession of John Brown, *Rolls House MS. first series, 892*.

² Very opposite stories were told of the behaviour of the gentlemen. On one side it was said that they were the great movers of the insurrection; on the other, that they were forced into it in fear of their lives. There were many, doubtless, of both kinds; but it seems to me as if they had all been taken by surprise. Their conduct was that of men who wished well to the rising, but believed it had exploded inopportunately.

³ The plough was to encourage the husbandmen; the chalice and host in remembrance of the spoiling of the Church; the five wounds to the couraging of the people to fight in Christ's cause; the horn to signify the taking of Horncastle.—Philip Trotter's Examination: *Rolls House MS. A 2, 29*.

down the heath, giving money among the crowd; and the insurrection now gaining point, another gentleman "wrote on the field, upon his saddlebow," a series of articles, which were to form the ground of the rising.

Six demands should be made upon the crown: 1. The religious houses should be restored. 2. The subsidy should be remitted. 3. The clergy should pay no more tenths and first-fruits to the crown. 4. The Statute of Uses should be repealed. 5. The villein blood should be removed from the privy council. 6. The heretic bishops, Cranmer and Latimer, Hilsey Bishop of Rochester, Brown Archbishop of Dublin, and their own Bishop Longlands the persecuting Erastian, should be deprived and punished.

The deviser and the sheriff sate on their horses side by side, and read these articles, one by one, aloud, to the people. "Do they please you or not?" they said, when they had done. "Yea, yea, yea!" the people shouted, waving their staves above their heads; and messengers were chosen instantly, and despatched upon the spot, to carry to Windsor to the king the demands of the people of Lincolnshire. Nothing was required more but that the rebellion should be cemented by a common crime; and this, too, was speedily accomplished.

The rebellion in Ireland had been inaugurated with the murder of Archbishop Allen; the insurgents of Lincolnshire found a lower victim, but they sacrificed him with the same savageness. The chancellor of Lincoln had been the instrument through whom Cromwell had communicated with the diocese, and was a special object of hatred. It does not appear how he fell into the people's hands. We find only that "he was very sick," and in this condition he was brought up on horseback into the field at Horncastle. As he appeared he was received by "the parsons and vicars" with a loud long yell—"Kill him! kill him!" "Whereupon two of the rebels, by procurement of the said parsons and vicars, pulled him violently off his horse, and, as he knelt upon his knees, with their staves they slew him, the parsons crying continually, 'Kill him! kill him!'"

As the body lay on the ground it was stripped bare, and the garments were parted among the murderers. The sheriff distributed the money that was in the chancellor's purse. "And every parson and every vicar in the field counselled their parishioners, with many comfortable words, to proceed in their journey, saying unto them that they should lack neither gold

nor silver,"¹ These, we presume, were Pole's seven thousand children of light who had not bowed the knee to Baal—the noble army of saints who were to flock to Charles's banners.²

The same Tuesday there was a rising at Lincoln. Bishop Longlands' palace was attacked and plundered, and the town occupied by armed bodies of insurgents. By the middle of the week the whole country was in movement—beacons blazing, alarm-bells ringing; and, pending the reply of the king, Lincoln became the focus to which the separate bodies from Castre, Horncastle, Louth, and all other towns and villages, flocked in for head quarters.

The duty of repressing riots and disturbances in England lay with the nobility in their several districts. In default of organised military or police, the nobility *ex officio* were the responsible guardians of the peace. They held their estates subject to these obligations, and neglect, unless it could be shown to be involuntary, was treason. The nobleman who had to answer for the peace of Lincolnshire was Lord Hussey of Sleaford. Lord Hussey had spoken, as I have stated, in unambiguous language, of the probability and desirableness of a struggle. When the moment came, it seems as if he had desired the fruits of a Catholic victory without the danger of fighting for it, or else had been frightened and doubtful how to act. When the first news of the commotion reached him, he wrote to the mayor of Lincoln, commanding him, in the king's name, to take good care of the city; to buy up or secure the arms; to levy men; and, if he found himself unable to hold his ground, to let him know without delay.³ His letter fell into the hands of the insurgents; but Lord Hussey, though he must have known the fate of it, or, at least, could not have been ignorant of the state of the country, sat still at Sleaford, waiting to see how events would turn. Yeomen and gentlemen who had not joined in the rising hurried to him for directions, promising to act in whatever way he would command; but he would give no

¹ Examination of Brian Staines: *Rolls House MS. A 2*, 29. In the margin of this document, pointing to the last paragraph, is an ominous finger, *✋*, drawn either by the king or Cromwell.

² Compare the Report of Lancaster Herald to Cromwell, *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xix.: "My especial good lord, so far as I have gone, I have found the most corrupted and malicious spirituality, inward and partly outward, that any prince of the world hath in his realm; and if the truth be perfectly known, it will be found that they were the greatest corrupters of the temporality, and have given the secret occasion of all this mischief."

³ Lord Hussey to the Mayor of Lincoln: *Cotton. MS. Vespasian, F 13*.

orders—he would remain passive—he would not be false to his prince—he would not be against the defenders of the faith. The volunteers who had offered their services for the crown he called “busy knaves”—“he bade them go their own way as they would;” and still uncertain, he sent messengers to the rebels to inquire their intentions. But he would not join them; he would not resist them; at length, when they threatened to end the difficulty by bringing him forcibly into their camp, he escaped secretly out of the country; while Lady Hussey, “who was supposed to know her husband’s mind,” sent provisions to a detachment of the Lincoln army.¹ For such conduct the commander of a division would be tried by a court-martial, with no uncertain sentence; but the extent of Hussey’s offence is best seen in contrast with the behaviour of Lord Shrewsbury, whose courage and fidelity on this occasion perhaps saved Henry’s crown.

The messengers sent from Horncastle were Sir Marmaduke Constable and Sir Edward Madyson. Heneage the commissioner was permitted to accompany them, perhaps to save him from being murdered by the priests. They did not spare the spur, and, riding through the night, they found the king at Windsor the day following. Henry on the instant despatched a courier to Lord Hussey, and another to Lord Shrewsbury, directing them to raise all the men whom they could muster; sending at the same time private letters to the gentlemen who were said to be with the insurgents, to recall them, if possible, to their allegiance. Lord Shrewsbury had not waited for instructions. Although his own county had not so far been disturbed, he had called out his tenantry, and had gone forward to Sherwood with every man that he could collect, on the instant that he heard of the rising. Expecting the form that it might assume, he had sent despatches on the very first day through Derbyshire, Stafford, Shropshire, Worcester, Leicester, and Northampton, to have the powers of the counties raised without a moment’s delay.² Henry’s letter found him at Sher-

¹ *Rolls House MS.* first series, 416. *Cutler’s Confession*: *MS. ibid.* 407. *Deposition of Robert Sotheby*: *ibid.* A 2, 29.

² *Lord Shrewsbury to the King*: *MS. State Paper Office*. Letter to the king and council, vol. v. Hollinshed tells a foolish story, that Lord Shrewsbury sued out his pardon to the king for moving without orders. As he had done nothing for which to ask pardon, so it is certain, from his correspondence with the king, that he did not ask for any. Let me take this opportunity of saying that neither Hollinshed, nor Stow, nor even Hall, nor any one of the chroniclers, can be trusted in their account of this rebellion.

wood on the 6th of October. The king he knew had written also to Lord Hussey; but, understanding the character of this nobleman better than his master understood it, and with a foreboding of his possible disloyalty, he sent on the messenger to Sleaford with a further note from himself, entreating him at such a moment not to be found wanting to his duty. "My lord," he wrote, "for the old acquaintance between your lordship and me, as unto him that I heartily love, I will write the plainness of my mind. Ye have always been an honourable and true gentleman, and, I doubt not, will now so prove yourself. I have no commandment from the king but only to suppress the rebellion; and I assure you, my lord, on my truth, that all the king's subjects of six shires will be with me to-morrow at night, to the number of forty thousand able persons; and I trust to have your lordship to keep us company."¹ His exhortations were in vain; Lord Hussey made no effort; he had not the manliness to join the rising—he had not the loyalty to assist in repressing it. He stole away and left the country to its fate. His conduct, unfortunately, was imitated largely in the counties on which Lord Shrewsbury relied for reinforcements. Instead of the thirty or forty thousand men whom he expected, the royalist leader could scarcely collect three or four thousand. Ten times his number were by this time at Lincoln, and increasing every day; and ominous news at the same time reaching him of the state of Yorkshire, he found it prudent to wait at Nottingham, overawing that immediate neighbourhood till he could hear again from the king.

Meanwhile Madyson and Constable had been detained in London. The immediate danger was lest the rebels should march on London before a sufficient force could be brought into the field to check them. Sir William Fitzwilliam, Sir John Russell, Cromwell's gallant nephew Richard, Sir William Parr, Sir Francis Brian, every loyal friend of the government who could be spared, scattered south and west of the metropolis calling the people on their allegiance to the king's service. The command-in-chief was given to the Duke of Suffolk. The stores in the Tower, a battery of field artillery, bows, arrows, ammunition of all kinds, were sent on in hot haste to Ampthill; and so little time had been lost, that on Monday, the 9th of October, a week only from the first outbreak at Louth, Sir John Russell with the advanced guard was at Stamford, and a respectable force was following in his rear.

MS. State Paper Office, first series.

Alarming reports came in of the temper of the north-midland and eastern counties. The disposition of the people between Lincoln and London was said to be as bad as possible.¹ If there had been delay or trifling, or if Shrewsbury had been less promptly loyal, in all likelihood the whole of England north of the Ouse would have been in a flame.

From the south and the west, on the other hand, accounts were more reassuring; Middlesex, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, all counties where the bishops had found heaviest work in persecuting Protestants, had answered loyally to the royal summons. Volunteers flocked in, man and horse, in larger numbers than were required; on Tuesday, the 10th, Suffolk was able to close his muster rolls, and needed only adequate equipment to be at the head of a body of men as large as he could conveniently move. But he had no leisure to wait for stores. Rumours were already flying that Russell had been attacked, that he had fought and lost a battle and twenty thousand men.² The security against a spread of the conflagration was to trample it out upon the spot. Imperfectly furnished as he was, he reached Stamford only two days after the first division of his troops. He was obliged to pause for twenty-four hours to provide means for crossing the rivers, and halt and refresh his men. The rebels on the Monday had been reported to be from fifty to sixty thousand strong. A lost battle would be the loss of the kingdom. It was necessary to take all precautions. But Suffolk within a few hours of his arrival at Stamford learnt that time was doing his work swiftly and surely. The insurrection, so wide and so rapid, had been an explosion of loose powder, not a judicious economy of it. The burst had been so spontaneous, there was an absence of preparation so complete, that it was embarrassed by its own magnitude. There was no forethought, no efficient leader—sixty thousand men had drifted to Lincoln and had halted there in noisy uncertainty till their way to London was interrupted.

¹ "My lord: Hugh Ascue, this bearer, hath shewed me that this day a servant of Sir William Hussey's reported how that in manner, in every place by the way as his master and he came, he hath heard as well old people as young pray God to speed the rebellious persons in Lincolnshire, and wish themselves with them; saying, that if they came that way, that they shall lack nothing that they can help them unto. And the said Hugh asked what persons they were which so reported, and he said *all*; which is a thing as meseemeth greatly to be noted.—Sir William Fitzwilliam to Lord Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. vi.

² Richard Cromwell to Lord Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. vii.

They had no commissariat—each man had brought a few days' provisions with him, and when these were gone the multitude dissolved with the same rapidity with which it had assembled. On the Wednesday at noon Richard Cromwell reported that the township of Boston, amounting to twelve thousand men, were gone home. In the evening of the same day five or six thousand others were said to have gone, and not more than twenty thousand at the outside were thought to remain in the camp. The young cavaliers in the royal army began to fear that there would be no battle after all.¹

Suffolk could now act safely, and preparatory to his advance he sent forward the king's answer to the articles of Horncastle.

"Concerning choosing of councillors," the king wrote, "I have never read, heard, nor known that princes' councillors and prelates should be appointed by rude and ignorant common people. How presumptuous, then, are ye, the rude commons of one shire, and that one of the most brute and beastly of the whole realm, and of least experience, to take upon you, contrary to God's law and man's law, to rule your prince whom ye are bound to obey and serve, and for no worldly cause to withstand.

"As to the suppression of religious houses and monasteries, we will that ye and all our subjects should well know that this is granted us by all the nobles, spiritual and temporal, of this our realm, and by all the commons of the same by act of parliament, and not set forth by any councillor or councillors upon their mere will and fantasy as ye falsely would persuade our realm to believe: and where ye allege that the service of God is much thereby diminished, the truth thereof is contrary, for there be none houses suppressed where God was well served, but where most vice, mischief, and abomination of living was used; and that doth well appear by their own confessions subscribed with their own hands, in the time of our visitation. And yet were suffered a great many of them, more than we by the act needed, to stand; wherein if they amend not their living we fear we have more to answer for than for the suppression of all the rest."

Dismissing the Act of Uses as beyond their understanding, and coming to the subsidy,—

¹ "Nothing we lament so much as, that they thus fly; for our trust was that we should have used them like as they have deserved; and I for my part am as sorry as if I had lost five hundred pounds. For my lord admiral (Sir John Russell), he is so earnest in the matter, that I dare say he would eat them with salt."—Richard Cromwell to Lord Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office.*

"Think ye," the king said, "that we be so faint-hearted that perforce ye would compel us with your insurrection and such rebellious demeanour to remit the same? Make ye sure by occasion of this your ingratitude, unnaturalness, and unkindness to us now administered, ye give us cause which hath always been as much dedicate to your wealth as ever was king, not so much to set our study for the setting forward of the same, seeing how unkindly and untruly ye deal now with us:

"Wherefore, sirs, remember your follies and traitorous demeanour, and shame not your native country of England. We charge you eftsoons that ye withdraw yourselves to your own houses every man, cause the provokers of you to this mischief to be delivered to our lieutenant's hands or ours, and you yourselves submit yourselves to such condign punishment as we and our nobles shall think you worthy to suffer. For doubt ye not else that we will not suffer this injury at your hands unrevenge; and we pray unto Almighty God to give you grace to do your duties; and rather obediently to consent amongst you to deliver into the hands of our lieutenant a hundred persons, to be ordered according to their demerits, than by your obstinacy and wilfulness to put yourselves, lives, wives, children, lands, goods, and chattels, besides the indignation of God, in the utter adventure of total destruction."¹

When the letter was brought in, the insurgent council were sitting in the chapter-house of the cathedral. The cooler-headed among the gentlemen, even those among them who on the whole sympathised in the rising, had seen by this time that success was doubtful, and that if obtained it would be attended with many inconveniences to themselves. The enclosures would go down, the cattle farms would be confiscated. The yeomen's tenures would be everywhere revised. The probability, however, was that, without concert, without discipline, without a leader, they would be destroyed in detail; their best plan would be to secure their own safety. Their prudence nearly cost them their lives.

"We, the gentlemen," says one of them, when the letters came, thought "to read them secretly among ourselves; but as we were reading them the commons present cried that they would hear them read or else pull them from us. And therefore I read the letters openly; and because there was a little clause there which we feared would stir the commons, I did

¹ Henry VIII. to the Rebels in Lincolnshire: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 463, etc.

leave that clause unread, which was perceived by a canon there, and he said openly the letter was falsely read, by reason whereof I was like to be slain." ¹

The assembly broke into confusion. The alarm spread that the gentlemen would betray the cause, as in fact they intended to do. The clergy and the leaders of the commons clamoured to go forward and attack Suffolk, and two hundred of the most violent went out into the cloister to consult by themselves. After a brief conference they resolved that the clergy had been right from the first: that the gentlemen were no true friends of the cause, and they had better kill them. They went back into the chapter-house, and, guarding the doors, prepared to execute their intention, when some one cried that it was wiser to leave them till the next day. They should go with them into action, and if they flinched they would kill them then. After some hesitation the two hundred went out again—again changed their minds and returned; but by this time the intended victims had escaped by a private entrance into the house of the murdered chancellor, and barricaded the door. It was now evening. The cloisters were growing dark, and the mob finally retired to the camp, swearing that they would return at daybreak.

The gentlemen then debated what they should do. Lincoln cathedral is a natural fortress. The main body of the insurgents lay round the bottom of the hill on which the cathedral stands; the gentlemen, with their retinues, seem to have been lodged in the houses round the close, and to have been left in undisputed possession of their quarters for the night. Suffolk was known to be advancing. They determined, if possible, to cut their way to him in the morning, or else to hold out in their present position till they were relieved. Meanwhile the division in the council had extended to the camp. Alarmed by the desertions, surprised by the rapidity with which the king's troops had been collected, and with the fatal distrust of one another which forms the best security of governments against the danger of insurrection, the farmers and villagers were disposed in large numbers to follow the example of their natural leaders. The party of the squires were for peace: the party of the clergy for a battle. The former in the darkness moved off in a body and joined the party in the cathedral. There was now no longer danger. The gentry were surrounded by dependents on whom they could rely; and though still

¹ Confession of Thos. Mayne: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 432.

inferior in number, were better armed and disciplined than the brawling crowds of fanatics in the camp. When day broke they descended the hill, and told the people that for the present their enterprise must be relinquished. The king had said that they were misinformed on the character of his measures. It was, perhaps, true, and for the present they must wait and see. If they were deceived they might make a fresh insurrection.¹

They were heard in sullen silence, but they were obeyed. There was no resistance; they made their way to the king's army, and soon after the Duke of Suffolk, Sir John Russell, and Cromwell rode into Lincoln. The streets, we are told, were crowded, but no cheer saluted them, no bonnet was moved. The royalist commanders came in as conquerors after a bloodless victory, but they read in the menacing faces which frowned upon them that their work was still, perhaps, to be done.

For the present, however, the conflagration was extinguished. The cathedral was turned into an arsenal, fortified and garrisoned;² and the suspicion and jealousy which had been raised between the spirituality and the gentlemen soon doing its work, the latter offered their services to Suffolk, and laboured to earn their pardon by their exertions for the restoration of order. The towns one by one sent in their submission. Louth made its peace by surrendering unconditionally fifteen of the original leaders of the commotion. A hundred or more were taken prisoners elsewhere, Abbot Mackarel and his canons being of the number;³ and Suffolk was informed that these, who were the worst offenders, being reserved for future punishment, he might declare a free pardon to all the rest "without doing unto them any hurt or damage in their goods or persons."⁴

In less than a fortnight a rebellion of sixty thousand persons had subsided as suddenly as it had risen. Contrived by the monks and parish priests, it had been commenced without concert, it had been conducted without practical skill. The clergy had communicated to their instruments alike their fury and their incapacity.

But the insurrection in Lincolnshire was but the first shower which is the herald of the storm.

On the night of the 12th of October there was present at an inn in Lincoln, watching the issue of events, a gentleman of

¹ Confession of Thos. Mayne: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 432.

² Henry VIII. to the Duke of Suffolk: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 480.

³ Wriothesley to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 471. Examination of the Prisoners: *Rolls House MS.*

⁴ Henry VIII. to the Duke of Suffolk: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 480.

Yorkshire, whose name, a few weeks later, was ringing through every English household in accents of terror or admiration.

Our story must go back to the beginning of the month. The law vacation was drawing to its close, and younger brothers in county families who then, as now, were members of the inns of court, were returning from their holidays to London. The season had been of unusual beauty. The summer had lingered into the autumn, and during the latter half of September young Sir Ralph Ellerkar, of Ellerkar Hall in "Yorkyswold," had been entertaining a party of friends for cub-hunting. Among his guests were his three cousins, John, Robert, and Christopher Aske. John, the eldest, the owner of the old family property of Aughton-on-the-Derwent, a quiet, unobtrusive gentleman, with two sons, students at the Temple: Robert, of whom, till he now emerges into light, we discover only that he was a barrister in good practice at Westminster; and Christopher, the possessor of an estate in Marshland in the West Riding. The Askes were highly connected, being cousins of the Earl of Cumberland,¹ whose eldest son, Lord Clifford, had recently married a daughter of the Duke of Suffolk, and niece therefore of the king.²

The hunting party broke up on the 3rd of October, and Robert, if his own account of himself was true, left Ellerkar with no other intention than of going direct to London to his business. His route lay across the Humber at Welton, and when in the ferry he heard from the boatmen that the commons were up in Lincolnshire. He wished to return, but the state of the tide would not allow him; he then endeavoured to make his way by by-roads and bridle-paths to the house of a brother-in-law at Sawcliffe; but he was met somewhere near Appleby by a party of the rebels. They demanded who he was, and on his replying, they offered him the popular oath. It is hard to believe that he was altogether taken by surprise; a man of so remarkable powers as he afterwards exhibited could not have been wholly ignorant of the condition of the country, and if his loyalty had been previously sound he would not have thrown himself into the rising with such deliberate energy. The people by whom he was "taken," as he designated what had befallen him,³ became his body-guard to Sawcliffe. He must have been well

¹ "The captain and the Earl of Cumberland came of two sisters."—Lord Darcy to Somerset Herald: *Rolls House MS.*

² *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 523.

³ Manner of the taking of Robert Aske: *Rolls House MS. A 2, 28.*

known in the district. His brother's property lay but a few miles distant, across the Trent, and as soon as the news spread that he was among the rebels his name was made a rallying cry. The command of the district was assigned to him from the Humber to Kirton, and for the next few days he remained endeavouring to organise the movement into some kind of form; but he was doubtful of the prospects of the rebellion, and doubtful of his own conduct. The commons of the West Riding beginning to stir, he crossed into Marshland; he passed the Ouse into Howdenshire, going from village to village, and giving orders that no bells should be rung, no beacon should be lighted, except on the receipt of a special message from himself.

Leaving his own county, he again hastened back to his command in Lincolnshire; and by this time he heard of Suffolk's advance with the king's answer to the petition. He rode post to Lincoln, and reached the town to find the commons and the gentlemen on the verge of fighting among themselves. He endeavoured to make his way into the cathedral close, but finding himself suspected by the commons, and being told that he would be murdered if he persevered, he remained in concealment till Suffolk had made known the intentions of the government; then, perhaps satisfied that the opportunity was past, perhaps believing that if not made use of on the instant it might never recur, perhaps resigning himself to be guided by events, he went back at full speed to Yorkshire.

And events had decided: whatever his intentions may have been, the choice was no longer open to him.

As he rode down at midnight to the bank of the Humber, the clash of the alarm-bells came pealing far over the water. From hill to hill, from church tower to church tower, the warning lights were shooting. The fishermen on the German Ocean watched them flickering in the darkness from Spurnhead to Scarborough, from Scarborough to Berwick-upon-Tweed. They streamed westward, over the long marshes across Spalding Moor; up the Ouse and the Wharf, to the watershed where the rivers flow into the Irish Sea. The mountains of Westmoreland sent on the message to Kendal, to Cockermouth, to Penrith, to Carlisle; and for days and nights there was one loud storm of bells and blaze of beacons from the Trent to the Cheviot Hills.

All Yorkshire was in movement. Strangely, too, as Aske assures us, he found himself the object of an unsought distinction. His own name was the watchword which every tongue was crying. In his absence an address had gone out around the

towns, had been hung on church doors, and posted on market crosses, which bore his signature, though, as he protested, it was neither written by himself nor with his consent.¹ Ill composed, but with a rugged eloquence, it called upon all good Englishmen to make a stand for the Church of Christ, which wicked men were destroying, for the commonwealth of the realm, and for their own livings, which were stolen from them by impositions. For those who would join it should be well; those who refused to join, or dared to resist, should be under Christ's curse, and be held guilty of all the Christian blood which should be shed.

Whoever wrote the letter, it did its work. One scene out of many will illustrate the effect.

William Stapleton, a friend of Aske, and a brother barrister, also bound to London for the term, was spending a few days at the Grey Friars at Beverley, with his brother Christopher. The latter had been out of health, and had gone thither for change of air with his wife. The young lawyer was to have set out over the Humber on the 4th of October. At three in the morning his servant woke him, with the news that the Lincolnshire beacons were on fire, and the country was impassable. Beverley itself was in the greatest excitement; the sick brother was afraid to be left alone, and William Stapleton agreed for the present to remain and take care of him. On Sunday morning they were startled by the sound of the alarm-bell. A servant who was sent out to learn what had happened, brought in word that an address had arrived from Robert Aske, and that a proclamation was out, under the town seal, calling on every man to repair to Westwood Green, under the walls of the Grey Friars, and be sworn in to the commons.² Christopher Stapleton, a sensible man, made somewhat timid by illness, ordered all doors to be locked and bolted, and gave directions that no one of his household should stir. His wife, a hater of Protestants, an admirer of Queen Catherine, of the Pope, and the old religion,

¹ "There was a letter forged in my name to certain towns, which I utterly deny to be my deed or consent."—Narrative of Robert Aske: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28. This is apparently the letter which is printed in the *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 467. It was issued on the 7th or 8th of October (see Stapleton's Confession: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28), the days on which, according to Aske's own confession, he seems to have been in the West Riding.

² The oath varied a little in form. In Yorkshire the usual form was, "Ye shall swear to be true to God, the king, and the commonwealth."—Aske's Narrative: *Rolls House MS.* The tendency of the English to bind themselves with oaths, explains and partly justifies the various oaths required by the government.

was burning with sympathy for the insurgents. The family confessor appeared on the scene, a certain Father Bonaventure, taking the lady's part, and they two together "went forth out of the door among the crowd." "God's blessing on ye," William Stapleton heard his sister-in-law cry.—"Speed ye well," the priest cried; "speed ye well in your godly purposes." The people rushed about them. "Where are your husband and his brother?" they shouted to her. "In the Freers," she answered. "Bring them out!" the cry rose. "Pull them out by the head; or we will burn the Freers and them within it." Back flew the lady in haste, and perhaps in scorn, to urge forward her hesitating lord—he wailing, wringing his hands, wishing himself out of the world; she exclaiming it was God's quarrel—let him rise and show himself a man. The dispute lingered; the crowd grew impatient; the doors were dashed in; they rushed into the hall, and thrust the oath down the throat of the reluctant gentleman, and as they surged back they swept the brother out with them upon the green. Five hundred voices were crying, "Captains! captains!" and presently a shout rose above the rest, "Master William Stapleton shall be our captain!" And so it was to be: the priest Bonaventure had willed it so; and Stapleton, seeing worse would follow if he refused, consented.

It was like a contagion of madness—instantly he was wild like the rest. "Forward!" was the cry—whither, who knew or cared? only "Forward!" and as the multitude rocked to and fro, a splashed rider spurred through the streets, "like a man distraught,"¹ eyes staring, hair streaming, shouting, as he passed, that they should rise and follow, and flashing away like a meteor.

So went Sunday at Beverley, the 8th of October, 1536; and within a few days the substance of the same scene repeated itself in all the towns of all the northern counties, the accidents only varying. The same spirit was abroad as in Lincolnshire; but here were strong heads and strong wills, which could turn the wild humour to a purpose—men who had foreseen the catastrophe, and were prepared to use it.

Lord Darcy of Templehurst was among the most distinguished of the conservative nobility. He was an old man. He had won his spurs under Henry VII. He had fought against the Moors by the side of Ferdinand, and he had earned laurels in the wars in France against Louis XII. Strong in his military

¹ Deposition of William Stapleton: *Rolls House MS.*

reputation, in his rank, and in his age, he had spoken in parliament against the separation from the see of Rome; and though sworn like the rest of the peers to obey the law, he had openly avowed the reluctance of his assent—he had secretly maintained a correspondence with the Imperial court.

The king, who respected a frank opposition, and had no suspicion of anything beyond what was open, continued his confidence in a man whom he regarded as a tried friend, and Darcy, from his credit with the crown, his rank and his position, was at this moment the feudal sovereign of the East Riding. To him Henry wrote on the first news of the commotion in Lincolnshire, when he wrote to Lord Hussey and Lord Shrewsbury, but, entering into fuller detail, warning him of the falsehoods which had been circulated to excite the people, and condescending to inform him "that he had never thought to take one pennyworth of the parish churches' goods from them." He desired Lord Darcy to let the truth be known, meantime he assured him that there was no cause for alarm, "one true man was worth twenty thieves and traitors," and all true men he doubted not would do their duty in suppressing the insurrection.¹

This letter was written on the same 8th of October on which the scenes which I have described took place at Beverley. Five days later the king had found reason to change his opinion of Lord Darcy.

To him, as to Lord Hussey, the outbreak at this especial crisis appeared inopportune. The Emperor had just suffered a heavy reverse in France, and there was no prospect at that moment of assistance either from Flanders or Spain. . . . A fair occasion had been lost in the preceding winter—another had not yet arisen. . . . The conservative English were, however, strong in themselves, and might be equal to the work if they were not crushed prematurely; he resolved to secure them time by his own inaction. . . . On the first symptoms of uneasiness he sent his son, Sir Arthur Darcy, to Lord Shrewsbury, who was then at Nottingham. Young Darcy, after reporting as to the state of the country, was to go on to Windsor with a letter to the king. Sharing, however, in none of his father's opinions, he caught fire in the stir of Shrewsbury's camp—he preferred to remain where he was, and, sending the letter by another hand, he wrote to Templehurst for arms and men. Lord Darcy had no intention that his banner should be seen in the field against the insurgents.

¹ Henry VIII. to Lord Darcy, October 8th; *Rolls House MS.* first series, 282.

Unable to dispose of Sir Arthur as he had intended, he replied that he had changed his mind; he must return to him at his best speed; for the present, he said, he had himself raised no men, nor did he intend to raise any—he had put out a proclamation with which he trusted the people might be quieted.¹ The manœuvre answered well. Lord Shrewsbury was held in check by insurrections on either side of him, and could move neither on Yorkshire nor Lincolnshire. The rebels were buying up every bow, pike, and arrow in the country; and Lord Darcy now shut himself up with no more than twelve of his followers in Pomfret Castle, without arms, without fuel, without provisions, and taking no effectual steps to secure either the one or the other. In defence of his conduct he stated afterwards that his convoys had been intercepted. An experienced military commander who could have called a thousand men under arms by a word, could have introduced a few waggon-loads of corn and beer, had such been his wish. He was taking precautions (it is more likely) to enable him to yield gracefully to necessity should necessity arise. The conflagration now spread swiftly. Every one who was disposed to be loyal looked to Darcy for orders. The Earl of Cumberland wrote to him from Skipton Castle, Sir Brian Hastings the sheriff, Sir Richard Tempest, and many others. They would raise their men, they said, and either join him at Pomfret, or at whatever place he chose to direct. But Darcy would do nothing, and would allow nothing to be done. He replied that he had no commission and could give no instructions. The king had twice written to him, but had sent no special directions, and he would not act without them.²

Lord Darcy played skilfully into the rebels' hands. The rebels made admirable use of their opportunity. With method in their madness, the townships everywhere organised themselves. Instead of marching in unwieldy tumultuous bodies, they picked their "tallest and strongest" men; they armed and equipped them; and, raising money by a rate from house to house, they sent them out with a month's wages in their pockets, and a promise of a continuance should their services be prolonged. The day after his return from Lincoln, Aske found himself at the head of an army of horse and foot, furnished admirably at all points. They were grouped in companies by

¹ Letters to and from Lord Darcy: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 282.

² Henry had written him a second letter on the 9th of October, in which, knowing nothing as yet of the rising in Yorkshire, he had expressed merely a continued confidence in Darcy's discretion.

their parishes, and instead of colours, the crosses of the churches were borne by the priests.

The first great rendezvous in Yorkshire was on Weighton common. Here Stapleton came in with nine thousand men from Beverley and Holderness. The two divisions encamped upon the heath, and Aske became acknowledged as the commander of the entire force. Couriers brought in news from all parts of the country. Sir Ralph Evers and Sir George Conyers were reputed to have taken refuge in Scarborough. Sir Ralph Ellerkar the elder, and Sir John Constable were holding Hull for the king. These places must at once be seized. Stapleton rode down from Weighton to Hull gate, and summoned the town. The mayor was for yielding at once; he had no men, he said, no meat, no money, no horse or harness—resistance was impossible. Ellerkar and Constable, however, would not hear of surrender. Constable replied that he would rather die with honesty than live with shame; and Stapleton carrying back this answer to Aske, it was agreed that the former should lay siege to Hull upon the spot, while the main body of the army moved forward upon York.¹

Skirting parties meantime scoured the country far and near. They surrounded the castles and houses, and called on every lord, knight, and gentleman to mount his horse, with his servants, and join them, or they would leave neither cornstack in their yards nor cattle in their sheds, and would burn their roofs over their heads.

Aske himself was present everywhere, or some counterfeit who bore his name. It seemed "there were six Richmonds in the field." The Earl of Northumberland lay sick at Wressill Castle. From the day of Anne Boleyn's trial he had sunk, and now was dying. His failing spirit was disturbed by the news that Aske was at his gates, and that an armed host were shouting "thousands for a Percy!" If the earl could not come, the rebels said, then his brothers must come—Sir Thomas and Sir Ingram. And then, with side glances, we catch sight of Sir Ingram Percy swearing in the commons, and stirring the country at Alnwick: "using such malicious words as were abominable to hear; wishing that he might thrust his sword into the Lord Cromwell's belly; wishing the Lord Cromwell were hanged on high, and he standing by to see it." And again we see the old Countess of Northumberland at her house at Semar, "sore weeping and lamenting" over her children's

¹ Stapleton's Confession: *Rolls House MS. A 2*, 28.

disloyalty; Sir Thomas Percy listening, half moved, to her entreaties; for a moment pausing uncertain, then borne away by the contagion, and a few hours later flaunting, with gay plumes and gorgeous armour, in the rebel host.¹

On Sunday, October the 15th, the main army crossed the Derwent, moving direct for York. - On Monday they were before the gates. The citizens were all in the interest of the rebellion; and the mayor was allowed only to take precautions for the security of property and life. The engagements which he exacted from Aske, and which were punctually observed, speak well for the discipline of the insurgents. No pillage was to be permitted, or injury of any kind. The prices which were to be paid for victuals and horse-meat were published in the camp by proclamation. The infantry, as composed of the most dangerous materials, were to remain in the field. On these terms the gates were opened, and Aske, with the horse, rode in and took possession.² His first act, on entering the city, was to fix a proclamation on the doors of the cathedrals, inviting all monks and nuns dispossessed from their houses to report their names and conditions, with a view to their immediate restoration. Work is done rapidly by willing hands, in the midst of a willing people. In the week which followed, by a common impulse, the king's tenants were universally expelled. The vacant dormitories were again peopled; the refectories were again filled with exulting faces. "Though it were never so late when they returned, the friars sang matins the same night."³

Orders were next issued in Aske's name, commanding all lords, knights, and gentlemen in the northern counties to repair to his presence; and now, at last, Lord Darcy believed that the time was come when he might commit himself with safety; or rather, since the secrets of men's minds must not be lightly conjectured, he must be heard first in his own defence, and afterwards his actions must speak for him. On the night of the surrender of York he sent his steward from Pomfret, with a request for a copy of the oath and of the articles of the rising, promising, if they pleased him, to join the confederacy. The Archbishop of York, Dr. Magnus, an old diplomatic servant of the crown, Sir Robert Constable, Lord Neville, and Sir Nicholas Babthorpe,

¹ Examination of Sir Thomas Percy: *Rolls House MS.* Demeanour of Sir Thomas and Sir Ingram Percy: *MS. ibid.* first series, 896.

² "The said Aske suffered no foot man to enter the city, for fear of spoils." —Manner of the taking of Robert Aske: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28.

³ Earl of Oxford to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. iii.

were by this time with him in the castle. His own compliance would involve the compliance of these, and would partially involve their sanction.

On the morning of the 16th or 17th he received a third letter from the king, written now in grave displeasure; the truth had not been told; the king had heard, to his surprise, that Lord Darcy, instead of raising a force and taking the field, had shut himself up, with no more than twelve servants, in Pomfret; "If this be so," he said, "it is negligently passed."¹ Lord Darcy excused himself by replying that he was not to blame; that he had done his best; but there were sixty thousand men in arms, forty thousand in harness. They took what they pleased—horses, plate, and cattle; the whole population was with them; he could not trust his own retainers; and, preparing the king for what he was next to hear, he informed him that Pomfret itself was defenceless. "The town," he said, "nor any other town, will not victual us for our money; and of such provision as we ourselves have made, the commons do stop the passage so straitly, that no victual can come to us; the castle is in danger to be taken, or we to lose our lives."² The defence may have been partially true. It may have been merely plausible. At all events, it was necessary for him to come to some swift resolution. The occupation of Lincoln by the Duke of Suffolk had set Lord Shrewsbury at liberty; arms had been sent down, and money; and the midland counties, in recovered confidence, had furnished recruits, though in limited numbers. He was now at Newark, in a condition to advance; and on the same 17th of October on which this despairing letter was written, he sent forward a post to Pomfret, telling Darcy to hold his ground, and that he would join him at the earliest moment possible.³ Neither the rebels nor Shrewsbury could afford to lose so important a position; and both made haste. Again, on the same Tuesday, the 17th, couriers brought news to Aske, at York, that the commons of Durham were hasting to join him, bringing with them Lord Latimer, Lord Lumley, and the Earl of Westmoreland. Being thus secure in his rear, the rebel leader carried his answer to Lord Darcy in person, at the head of his forces. He reached Pomfret on the afternoon of Thursday, the 19th; finding the town on his side, and knowing

¹ Henry VIII. to Lord Darcy, October 13: *Rolls House MS.*

² Lord Darcy to the King, October 17: *MS. ibid.*

³ Lord Shrewsbury to Lord Darcy: *Rolls House MS. first series, 282.* Darcy certainly received this letter, since a copy of it is in the collection made by himself.

or suspecting Darcy's disposition, he sent in a message that the castle must be delivered, or it should be immediately stormed. A conference was demanded and agreed to. Hostages were sent in by Aske. Lord Darcy, the archbishop, and the other noblemen and gentlemen, came out before the gate.

"And there and then the said Aske declared unto the said lords spiritual and temporal the griefs of the commons; and how first the lords spiritual had not done their duty, in that they had not been plain with the King's Highness for the speedy remedy and punishing of heresy, and the preachers thereof; and for the taking the ornaments of the churches and abbeys suppressed, and the violating of relics by the suppressors; the irreverent demeanour of the doers thereof; the abuse of the vestments taken extraordinary; and other their negligences in doing their duty, as well to their sovereign as to the commons.

"And to the lords temporal the said Aske declared that they had misused themselves, in that they had not prudently declared to his Highness the poverty of his realm, whereby all dangers might have been avoided; for insomuch as in the north parts much of the relief of the commons was by favour of abbeys; and that before this last statute made the King's Highness had no money out of that shire in award yearly, for that his Grace's revenues of them went to the finding of Berwick; now the property of abbeys suppressed, tenths, and first-fruits, went out of those parts; by occasion whereof, within short space of years, there should no money nor treasure then be left, neither the tenant have to pay his yearly rent to his lord, nor the lord have money to do the king service. In those parts were neither the presence of his Grace, execution of his laws, nor yet but little recourse of merchandise; and of necessity the said country should either perish with skaith, or of very poverty make commotion or rebellion: and the lords knew the same to be true, and had not done their duty, for they had not declared the said poverty of the said country to the King's Highness."¹

"There were divers reasonings on both parts." Darcy asked for time; if not relieved, he said he would surrender on Saturday; but Aske, to whom Shrewsbury's position and intentions were well known, and who was informed privately that the few men who were in the castle would perhaps offer no resistance to an attack, "would not condescend thereto." He allowed Lord Darcy till eight o'clock the following morning, and no longer. The night passed. At the hour appointed, fresh delay was

¹ Manner of the taking of Robert Aske: *Rolls House MS. A 2*, 28.

demanding, but with a certainty that it would not be allowed; and the alternative being an immediate storm, the drawbridge was lowered—Pomfret Castle was in possession of the rebels, and Lord Darcy, the Archbishop of York, and every other man within the walls, high and low, were sworn to the common oath.

The extent of deliberate treachery on the part of Darcy may remain uncertain. The objects of the insurrection were cordially approved by him. It is not impossible that, when the moment came, he could not resign his loyalty without a struggle. But he had taken no precautions to avert the catastrophe, if he had not consciously encouraged its approach; he saw it coming, and he waited in the most unfavourable position to be overwhelmed; and when the step was once taken, beyond any question he welcomed the excuse to his conscience, and passed instantly to the front rank as among the chiefs of the enterprise.¹

The afternoon of the surrender the insurgent leaders were sitting at dinner at the great table in the hall. A letter was brought in and given to Lord Darcy. He read it, dropped it on the cloth, and "suddenly gave a great sigh." Aske, who was sitting opposite to him, stretched his hand for the paper across the board. It was brief, and carried no signature—Lord Shrewsbury, the writer merely said, would be at Pomfret the same night.²

The sign may be easily construed; but if it was a symptom of repentance, Darcy showed no other. A council of war was held when the dinner was over; and bringing his military knowledge into use, he pointed out the dangerous spots, he marked the lines of defence, and told off the commanders to their posts. Before night all the passages of the Don by which Shrewsbury could advance were secured.³

Leaving Pomfret, we turn for a moment to Hull, where Stapleton also had accomplished his work expeditiously. On the same day on which he separated from Aske he had taken a position on the north of the town. There was a private feud

¹ I believe that I am unnecessarily tender to Lord Darcy's reputation. Aske, though he afterwards contradicted himself, stated in his examination that Lord Darcy could have defended the castle had he wished.—*Rolls House MS.* A 2, 29. It was sworn that when he was advised "to victual and store Pomfret," he said, "there was no need; it would do as it was."—*Ibid.* And Sir Henry Saville stated that "when Darcy heard of the first rising, he said, 'Ah! they are up in Lincolnshire. God speed them well. I would they had done this three years ago, for the world should have been the better for it.'"—*Ibid.*

² Aske's Deposition: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 414.

³ Examination of Sir Thomas Percy: *Rolls House MS.*

between Beverley and Hull. His men were unruly, and eager for spoil; and the harbour being full of shipping, it was with difficulty that he prevented them from sending down blazing pitch barrels with the tide into the midst of it, and storming the walls in the smoke and confusion. Stapleton, however, was a resolute man; he was determined that the cause should not be disgraced by outrage, and he enforced discipline by an act of salutary severity. Two of the most unmanageable of his followers were tried by court-martial, and sentenced to be executed. "A Friar," Stapleton says, "was assigned to them, that they might make them clean to God," and they expected nothing but death. But the object so far was only to terrify. One of them, "a sanctuary man," was tied by the waist with a rope, and trailed behind a boat up and down the river, and the waterman did at several times put him down with the oar under the head." The other seeing him, thought also to be so handled; "howbeit, at the request of honest men, and being a house-keeper, he was suffered to go unpunished, and both were banished the host; after which there was never spoil more."¹

In the town there was mere despondency, and each day made defence more difficult. Reinforcements were thronging into the rebels' camp; the harbour was at their mercy. Constable was for holding out to the last, and then cutting his way through. Ellerkar would agree to surrender if he and his friend might be spared the oath and might leave the county. These terms were accepted, and on Friday Stapleton occupied Hull.

So it went over the whole north; scarcely one blow was struck anywhere. The whole population were swept along in the general current, and Skipton Castle alone in Yorkshire now held out for the crown.

With the defence of this place is connected an act of romantic heroism which deserves to be remembered.

Robert Aske, as we have seen, had two brothers, Christopher and John. In the hot struggle the ties of blood were of little moment, and when the West Riding rose, and they had to choose the part which they would take, "they determined rather to be hewn in gobbets than stain their allegiance." Being gallant gentlemen, instead of flying the county, they made their way with forty of their retainers to their cousin the Earl of Cumberland, and with him threw themselves into Skipton. The aid came in good time; for the day after their arrival the earl's whole retinue rode off in a body to the rebels,

¹ Stapleton's Confession: *Rolls House MS. A 2, 28.*

leaving him but a mixed household of some eighty people to garrison the castle. They were soon surrounded; but being well provisioned, and behind strong stone walls, they held the rebels at bay, and but for an unfortunate accident they could have faced the danger with cheerfulness. But unhappily the earl's family were in the heart of the danger.

Lady Eleanor Clifford, Lord Clifford's young wife, with three little children and several other ladies, were staying, when the insurrection burst out, at Bolton Abbey. Perhaps they had taken sanctuary there; or possibly they were on a visit, and were cut off by the suddenness of the rising. There, however, ten miles off among the glens and hills, the ladies were, and on the third day of the siege notice was sent to the earl that they should be held as hostages for his submission. The insurgents threatened that the day following Lady Eleanor and her infant son and daughters should be brought up in front of a storming party, and if the attack again failed, they would "violate all the ladies, and enforce them with knaves" under the walls.¹ After the ferocious murder of the Bishop of Lincoln's chancellor, no villainy was impossible; and it is likely that the Catholic rebellion would have been soiled by as deep an infamy as can be found in the English annals but for the adventurous courage of Christopher Aske. In the dead of the night, with the vicar of Skipton, a groom, and a boy, he stole through the camp of the besiegers. He crossed the moors, with led horses, by unfrequented paths, and he "drew such a draught," he says, that he conveyed all the said ladies through the commons in safety, "so close and clean, that the same was never mistrusted nor perceived till they were within the castle;"² a noble exploit, shining on the bypaths of history like a rare rich flower. Proudly the little garrison looked down, when day dawned, from the battlements, upon the fierce multitude who were howling below in baffled rage. A few days later, as if in scorn of their impotence, the same gallant gentleman flung open the gates, dropped the drawbridge, and rode down in full armour, with his train, to the market-cross at Skipton, and there, after three long "Oyez's," he read aloud the king's proclamation in the midst of the crowd . . . "with leisure enough," he adds, in his disdainful way . . . "and that done, he returned to the castle."

While the north was thus in full commotion the government were straining every nerve to meet the emergency. The king

¹ Examination of Christopher Aske: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 840.

² *Ibid.*

had at first intended to repair in person to Lincolnshire. He had changed his mind when he heard of Suffolk's rapid success.¹ But Yorkshire seemed again to require his presence. The levies which had been sent for from the southern counties had been countermanded, but were recalled within a few hours of the first order, "The matter hung like a fever, now hot, now cold." Rumours took the place of intelligence. Each post contradicted the last, and for several days there was no certain news, either of the form or the extent of the danger. Lord Shrewsbury wrote that he had thrown his outposts forwards to the Don; but he doubted his ability to prevent the passage of the river, which he feared the rebels would attempt. He was still underhanded, and entreated assistance. The Earls of Rutland and Huntingdon were preparing to join him; but the reinforcement which they would bring was altogether inadequate, and the Duke of Norfolk and the Marquis of Exeter were sent down to add the weight of their names; their men should follow as they could be raised. Cromwell was collecting money in London. The subsidy had not been paid in; large sums belonging to the crown had fallen into the hands of Aske at York, and the treasury was empty. But "benevolences" were extorted from the wealthy London clergy: "they could not help in their persons," the king said, and "they must show their good will, if they had any," in another way.² Loans could be borrowed, besides, in the City; the royal plate could go to the Mint; the crown jewels, if necessary, could be sold. Henry, more than any of the council, now comprehended the danger. "His Majesty," wrote his secretary on the 18th of October, "appeareth to fear much this matter, specially if he should want money, for in Lord Darcy, his Grace said, he had no great hope." Ten thousand pounds were raised in two days. It was but a small instalment; but it served to "stop the gap" for the moment. Three thousand men, with six pieces of field artillery, were sent at once after Norfolk, and overtook him on the 24th of October at Worksop.

Norfolk, it was clear, had gone upon the service most reluctantly. He, too, had deeper sympathy with the movement than he cared to avow; but, even from those very sympathies, he was the fittest person to be chosen to suppress it. The rebels professed to have risen in defence of the nobility and the Catholic faith. They would have to fight their way through

¹ Henry VIII. to the Duke of Suffolk: *Rolls House MS.*

² Wriothesley to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 472.

an army led by the natural head of the party which they desired to serve.¹ The force under Shrewsbury was now at Doncaster, where, on the 25th, the Duke joined him. The town was in their hands, and the southern end of the bridge had been fortified. The autumn rains had by this time raised the river, securing their flank, and it would have been difficult for an attacking army to force a passage, even with great advantage of numbers. Their situation, at the same time, was most precarious; of the forty thousand men, of whom Shrewsbury had written to Lord Hussey, he had not been able to raise a tenth; and, if rumour was to be believed, the loyalty of the few who were with him would not bear too severe a strain. With Norfolk's reinforcements, the whole army did not, perhaps, exceed eight thousand men, while even these were divided; detachments were scattered up the river to watch and guard the few points at which it might be passed. Under such circumstances the conduct which might be necessary could only be determined on the spot; and the king, in his instructions, left a wide margin of discretion to the generals.² He had summoned the whole force of the south and west of England to join him in London, and he intended to appear himself at their head. He directed Norfolk, therefore, to observe the greatest caution; by all means to avoid a battle, unless with a certainty of victory; and "the chances of war being so uncertain," he said, "many times devices meant for the best purpose turning to evil happens and notable misfortunes," he advised that rather than there should be any risk incurred, the duke should fall back on the line of the Trent, fortify Newark and Nottingham, and wait his own arrival; "until," to use the king's own words, "with our army royal, which we do put in readiness, we shall repair unto you, and so with God's help be able to bear down the traitors before us; yourselves having more regard to the defence of us and of your natural country than to any dishonour that might be spoken of such retirement, which in the end shall prove more honourable than with a little hasty forwardness to jeopard both our honour and your lives." "For we assure you," he said, "we would neither adventure you our cousin of Norfolk, nor you our cousin of Shrewsbury, or other our good and true subjects, in such sort as there should be a

¹ The Marquis of Exeter, who was joined in commission with the Duke of Norfolk, never passed Newark. He seems to have been recalled, and sent down into Devonshire, to raise the musters in his own county.

² *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 493.

likelihood of wilful casting of any of you away for all the lands and dominion we have on that side Trent."

The Duke of Norfolk, on his way down, had written from Welbeck, "all desperately." By any means fair or foul, he had said that he would crush the rebels; "he would esteem no promise that he would make to them, nor think his honour touched in the breach of the same."¹

To this Henry replied, "Albeit we certainly know that ye will pretermitt none occasion wherein by policy or otherwise ye may damage our enemies, we doubt not, again, but in all your proceedings you will have such a temperance as our honour specially shall remain untouched, and yours rather increased, than by the certain grant of that you cannot certainly promise, appear in the mouths of the worst men anything defaced." Finally, he concluded, "Whereas you desire us, in case any mischance should happen unto you, to be good lord unto your children, surely, good cousin, albeit we trust certainly in God that no such thing shall fortune, yet we would you should perfectly know that if God should take you out of this transitory life before us, we should not fail so to remember your children, being your lively images, and in such wise to look on them with our princely favour as others by their example should not be discouraged to follow your steps."²

Lord Shrewsbury, as soon as he found himself too late to prevent the capture of Pomfret, sent forward Lancaster Herald with a royal proclamation, and with directions that it should be read at the market cross.³ The herald started on his perilous adventure "in his king's coat of arms." As he approached Pomfret he overtook crowds of the country people upon the road, who in answer to his questions told him that they were in arms to defend Holy Church, which wicked men were destroying. They and their cattle too, their burials and their weddings, were to be taxed, and they would not endure it. He

¹ *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 519.

² *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 495.

³ This particular proclamation—the same, apparently, which was read by Christopher Aske at Skipton—I have been unable to find. That which is printed in the *State Papers* from the Rolls House Records, belongs to the following month. The contents of the first, however, may be gathered from a description of it by Robert Aske, and a comparison of the companion proclamation issued in Lincolnshire. It stated briefly that the insurrection was caused by forged stories; that the king had no thought of suppressing parish churches, or taxing food or cattle. The abbey had been dissolved by act of parliament, in consequence of their notorious vice and profligacy. The people, therefore, were commanded to return to their homes, at their peril. The commotion in Lincolnshire was put down. The king was advancing in person to put them down also, if they continued disobedient.

informed them that they were all imposed upon. Neither the king nor the council had ever thought of any such measures; and the people, he said, seemed ready to listen, "being weary of their lives." Lies, happily, are canker-worms, and spoil all causes, good or bad, which admit their company, as those who had spread these stories discovered to their cost when the truth became generally known.

Lancaster Herald, however, could do little; he found the town swarming with armed men, eager and furious. He was arrested before he was able to unroll his parchment, and presently a message from the castle summoned him to appear before "the great captain."

"As I entered into the first ward," he said, "there I found many in harness, very cruel fellows, and a porter with a white staff in his hand; and at the two other ward gates a porter with his staff, accompanied with harnessed men. I was brought into the hall, which I found full of people; and there I was commanded to tarry till the traitorous captain's pleasure was known. In that space I stood up at the high table in the hall, and there shewed to the people the cause of my coming and the effect of the proclamation; and in doing the same the said Aske sent for me into his chamber, there keeping his port and countenance as though he had been a great prince."

The Archbishop of York, Lord Darcy, Sir Robert Constable, Mr. Magnus, Sir Christopher Danby, and several other gentlemen were in the room. As the herald entered, Aske rose, and, "with a cruel and inestimable proud countenance, stretched himself and took the hearing of the tale." When it was declared to him, he requested to see the proclamation, took it, and read it openly without reverence to any person; he then said he need call no council, he would give an answer of his own wit himself.

"Standing in the highest place in the chamber, taking the high estate upon him, 'Herald,' he replied, 'as a messenger you are welcome to me and all my company, intending as I do. And as for the proclamation sent from the lords from whom you come, it shall not be read at the market cross,¹ nor in no place amongst my people which be under my guiding.'"

¹ In explanation of his refusal, Aske said afterwards that it was for two causes; first, that if the herald should have declared to the people by proclamation that the commons in Lincolnshire were gone to their homes, they would have killed him; secondly, that there was no mention in the same proclamation neither of pardon nor of the demands which were the causes of their assembly.—Aske's Narrative: *Rolls House MS. A 2, 28*.

He spoke of his intentions; the herald inquired what they were. He said "he would go to London, he and his company, of pilgrimage to the King's Highness, and there to have all the vile blood of his council put from him, and all the noble blood set up again; and also the faith of Christ and his laws to be kept, and full restitution to Christ's Church of all wrongs done unto it; and also the commonalty to be used as they should be." "And he bade me trust to this," the herald said, "for he would die for it."

Lancaster begged for that answer in writing. "With a good will," Aske replied; "and he put his hand to his bill, and with a proud voice said, 'This is mine act, whosoever say to the contrary. I mean no harm to the king's person, but to see reformation; I will die in the quarrel, and my people with me.'"

Lancaster again entreated on his knees that he might read the proclamation. On his life he should not, Aske answered; he might come and go at his pleasure, and if Shrewsbury desired an interview with the Pomfret council, a safe conduct was at his service; but he would allow nothing to be put in the people's heads which might divert them from their purpose. "Commend me to the lords," he said at parting, "and tell them it were meet they were with me, for that I do is for all their wealths."¹

By this time the powers of all the great families, except the Cliffords, the Dacres, and the Musgraves, had come in to the confederacy. Six peers, or eldest sons of peers, were willingly or unwillingly with Aske at Pomfret. Lord Westmoreland was represented by Lord Neville. Lord Latimer was present in person, and with him Lord Darcy, Lord Lumley, Lord Scrope, Lord Conyers. Besides these, were the Constables of Flamborough, the Tempests from Durham, the Boweses, the Everses, the Fairfaxes, the Strangwayses, young Ellerkar of Ellerkar, the Danbys, St. Johns, Bulmers, Mallorys, Lascelleses, Nortons, Moncktons, Gowers, Ingoldsbys: we scarcely miss a single name famous in Border story. Such a gathering had not been seen in England since the grandfathers of these same men fought on Towton Moor, and the red rose of Lancaster faded before "the summer sun of York." Were their descendants, in another bloody battle, to seat a fresh Plantagenet on Edward's throne? No such aim had as yet risen consciously into form; but civil wars have strange issues—a scion of the old house was perhaps dreaming, beyond the sea, of a new and better-omened union;

¹ Lancaster Herald's Report: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 485.

a prince of the pure blood might marry the Princess Mary, restored to her legitimate inheritance. Of all the natural chiefs of the north who were in the power of the insurgents, Lord Northumberland only was absent. On the first summons he was spared for his illness; a second deputation ordered him to commit his powers, as the leader of his clan, to his brothers. But the brave Percy chose to die as he had lived. "At that time and at all other times, the earl was very earnest against the commons in the king's behalf and the lord privy seal's." He lay in his bed resolute in loyalty. The crowd yelled before the castle, "Strike off his head, and make Sir Thomas Percy earl." "I can die but once," he said; "let them do it; it will rid me of my pain." "And therewith the earl fell weeping, ever wishing himself out of the world."¹

They left him to nature and to death, which was waiting at his doors. The word went now through the army, "Every man to Doncaster." There lay Shrewsbury and the Duke of Norfolk, with a small handful of disaffected men between themselves and London, to which they were going.

They marched from Pomfret in three divisions. Sir Thomas Percy at the head of five thousand men, carried the banner of St. Cuthbert. In the second division, over ten thousand strong, were the musters of Holderness and the West Riding, with Aske himself and Lord Darcy. The rear was a magnificent body of twelve thousand horse, all in armour: the knights, esquires, and yeomen of Richmondshire and Durham.²

In this order they came down to the Don, where their advanced posts were already stationed, and deployed along the banks from Ferrybridge³ to Doncaster.

A deep river, heavily swollen, divided them from the royal army; but they were assured by spies that the water was the only obstacle which prevented the loyalists from deserting to them.⁴

¹ Stapleton's Confession: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28. Does this solitary and touching faithfulness, I am obliged to ask, appear as if Northumberland believed that four months before the king and Cromwell had slandered and murdered the woman whom he had once loved?

² "We were 30,000 men, as tall men, well horsed, and well appointed as any men could be."—Statement of Sir Marmaduke Constable: *MS. State Paper Office*. All the best evidence gives this number.

³ Not the place now known under this name—but a bridge over the Don three or four miles above Doncaster.

⁴ So Aske states.—Examination: *Rolls House MS.*, first series, 838. Lord Darcy went further. "If he had chosen," he said, "he could have fought Lord Shrewsbury with his own men, and brought never a man of the northmen with him." Somerset Herald, on the other hand, said,

There were traitors in London who kept them informed of Henry's movements, and even of the resolutions at the council board.¹ They knew that if they could dispose of the one small body in their front, no other force was as yet in the field which could oppose or even delay their march. They had even persuaded themselves that, on the mere display of their strength, the Duke of Norfolk must either retire or would himself come over to their side.

Norfolk, however, who had but reached Doncaster the morning of the same day, lay still, and as yet showed no sign of moving. If they intended to pass, they must force the bridge. Apparently they must fight a battle; and at this extremity they hesitated. Their professed intention was no more than an armed demonstration. They were ready to fight;² but in fighting they could no longer maintain the pretence that they were loyal subjects. They desired to free the king from plebeian advisers, and restore the influence of the nobles. It was embarrassing to commence with defeating an army led by four peers of the purest blood in England.³

For two days the armies lay watching each other.⁴ Parties of clergy were busy up and down the rebel host, urging an advance, protesting that if they hesitated the cause was lost; but their overwhelming strength seems to have persuaded the leaders that their cause, so far from being lost, was won already, and that there was no need of violence.

On the 25th Lancaster Herald came across to desire, in Norfolk's name, that four of them would hold an interview with him, under a safe conduct, in Doncaster, and explain their objects. Aske replied by a counter offer, that eight or twelve principal persons on both sides should hold a conference on Doncaster bridge.

that the rumour of disaffection was a feint. "One thing I am sure of," he told Lord Darcy, "there never were men more desirous to fight with men than ours to fight with you."—*Rolls House MS.*

¹ "Sir Marmaduke Constable did say, if there had been a battle, the southern men would not have fought. He knew that every third man was theirs. Further, he said the king and his council determined nothing but they had knowledge before my lord of Norfolk gave them knowledge."—Earl of Oxford to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office.*

² "I saw neither gentlemen nor commons willing to depart, but to proceed in the quarrel; yea, and that to the death. If I should say otherwise, I lie."—Aske's Examination: *Rolls House MS.*

³ Rutland and Huntingdon were in Shrewsbury's camp by this time.

⁴ "They wished," said Sir Marmaduke Constable, "the king had sent some younger lords to fight with them than my lord of Norfolk and my lord of Shrewsbury. No lord in England would have stayed them but my lord of Norfolk."—Earl of Oxford to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office.*

Both proposals were rejected; the duke said that he should remain in his lines, and receive their attack whenever they dared to make it.¹ There was a pause. Aske called a council of war; and "the lords"—or perhaps Lord Darcy—knowing that in rebellions half measures are suicide, voted for an immediate onset. Aske himself was of a different opinion. Norfolk did not wholly refuse negotiation; one other attempt might at least be made to avoid bloodshed. "The duke," he said, in his account of his conduct, "neither of those days had above six or eight thousand men, while we were nigh thirty thousand at the least; but we considered that if battle had been given, if the duke had obtained the victory, all the knights, esquires, and all others of those parts had been attainted, slain, and undone for the Scots and the enemies of the king; and, on the other part, if the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Shrewsbury, the Earl of Rutland, the Earl of Huntingdon, the Lord Talbot, and others, had been slain, what great captains, councillors, noble blood, persons dread in foreign realms, and Catholic knights had wanted and been lost. What displeasure should this have been to the king's public wealth, and what comfort to the antient enemies of the realm. It was considered also what honour the north parts had attained by the said duke; how he was beloved for his activity and fortune."²

If a battle was to be avoided nevertheless, no time was to be lost, for skirmishing parties were crossing the river backwards and forwards, and accident might at any moment bring on a general engagement. Aske had gained his point at the council; he signified his desire for a further parley, and on Thursday afternoon, after an exchange of hostages, Sir Thomas Hilton, Sir Ralph Ellerkar, Sir Robert Chaloner, and Sir Robert Bowes³

¹ The chroniclers tell a story of a miraculous fall of rain, which raised the river the day before the battle was to have been fought, and which was believed by both sides to have been an interference of Providence. Cardinal Pole also mentions the same fact of the rain, and is bitter at the superstitions of his friends; and yet, in the multitude of depositions which exist, made by persons present, and containing the most minute particulars of what took place, there is no hint of anything of the kind. The waters had been high for several days, and the cause of the unbloody termination of the crisis was more creditable to the rebel leaders.

² Second Examination of Robert Aske: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 838. It is true that this is the story of Aske himself, and was told when, after fresh treason, he was on trial for his life. But his bearing at no time was that of a man who would stoop to a lie. Life comparatively was of small moment to him.

³ Uncle of Marjory, afterwards wife of John Knox. Marjory's mother, Elizabeth, to whom so many of Knox's letters were addressed, was an Aske, but she was not apparently one of the Aughton family.

crossed to the royal camp to attempt, if possible, to induce the duke to agree to the open conference on the bridge.¹ The conditions on which they would consent to admit even this first slight concession were already those of conquerors. A preliminary promise must be made by the duke that all persons who, in heart, word, or deed, had taken part in the insurrection, should have free pardon for life, lands, and goods; that neither in the pardon nor in the public records of the realm should they be described as traitors. The duke must explain further the extent of his powers to treat. If "the captain" was to be present on the bridge, he must state what hostages he was prepared to offer for the security of so great a person; and as Richard Cromwell was supposed to be with the king's army, neither he nor any of his kin should be admitted among the delegates. If these terms were allowed, the conference should take place, and the objects of the insurrection might be explained in full for the duke to judge of them.²

¹ Aske's Narrative: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28.

² Instructions to Sir Thomas Hilton and his Companions: *Rolls House MS.*

There are many groups of "articles" among the Records. Each focus of the insurrection had its separate form; and coming to light one by one, they have created much confusion. I have thought it well, therefore, to print in full, from Sir Thomas Hilton's instructions, a list, the most explicit, as well as most authentic, which is extant.

"I. Touching our faith, to have the heresies of Luther, Wickliffe, Huss, Melancthon, Ecolampadius, Bucer's *Confessio Germanica*, *Apologia Melancthonis*, the works of Tyndal, of Barnes, of Marshal, Raskall, St. Germain, and such other heresies of Anabaptists, clearly within this realm to be annulled and destroyed.

"II. To have the supreme head, touching *cura animarum*, to be reserved unto the see of Rome, as before it was accustomed to be, and to have the consecration of the bishops from him, without any first-fruits or pensions to him to be paid out of this realm; or else a pension reasonable for the outward defence of our faith.

"III. We humbly beseech our most dread sovereign lord that the Lady Mary may be made legitimate, and the former statute therein annulled, for the danger if the title might incur to the crown of Scotland. This to be in parliament.

"IV. To have the abbeys suppressed to be restored—houses, lands, and goods.

"V. To have the tenths and first-fruits clearly discharged, unless the clergy will of themselves grant a rent-charge in penalty to the augmentation of the crown.

"VI. To have the friars observants restored unto their houses again.

"VII. To have the heretics, bishops and temporals, and their sect, to have condign punishment by fire, or such other; or else to try the quarrel with us and our partakers in battle.

"VIII. To have the Lord Cromwell, the lord chancellor, and Sir Richard Rich to have condign punishment as subverters of the good laws of this realm, and maintainers of the false sect of these heretics, and first inventors and bringers in of them.

"IX. That the lands in Westmoreland, Cumberland, Kendal, Furness,

Hilton and his companions remained for the night in Doncaster. In the morning they returned with a favourable answer. After dinner the same four gentlemen, accompanied by Lords Latimer, Lumley, Darcy, Sir Robert Constable, and Sir John Bulmer, went down upon the bridge. They were met by an equal number of knights and noblemen from Norfolk's army; the abbey lands in Massamshire, Kirkbyshire, and Netherdale, may be by tenant right, and the lord to have at every change two years' rent for gressam [the fine paid on renewal of a lease; the term is, I believe, still in use in Scotland], and no more, according to the grant now made by the lords to the commons there under their seal; and this to be done by act of parliament.

"X. The statute of hand-guns and cross-bows to be repealed, and the penalties thereof, unless it be on the king's forest or park, for the killing of his Grace's deer, red or fallow.

"XI. That Doctor Legh and Doctor Layton may have condign punishment for their extortions in the time of visitation, as bribes of nuns, religious houses, forty pounds, twenty pounds, and so to — leases under one common seal, bribes by them taken, and other their abominable acts by them committed and done.

"XII. Restoration for the election of knights of shires and burgesses, and for the uses among the lords in the parliament house, after their antient custom.

"XIII. Statutes for enclosures and intakes to be put in execution, and that all intakes and enclosures since the fourth year of King Henry the Seventh be pulled down, except on mountains, forests, or parks.

"XIV. To be discharged of the fifteenth, and taxes now granted by act of parliament.

"XV. To have the parliament in a convenient place at Nottingham or York, and the same shortly summoned.

"XVI. The statute of the declaration of the crown by will, that the same be annulled and repealed.

"XVII. That it be enacted by act of parliament that all recognisances, statutes, penalties under forfeit, during the time of this commotion, may be pardoned and discharged, as well against the king as strangers.

"XVIII. That the privileges and rights of the Church be confirmed by act of parliament; and priests not to suffer by the sword unless they be degraded. A man to be saved by his book; sanctuary to save a man for all cases in extreme need; and the Church for forty days, and further, according to the laws as they were used in the beginning of this king's days.

"XIX. The liberties of the Church to have their old customs, in the county palatine of Durham, Beverley, Ripon, St. Peter's at York, and such other, by act of parliament.

"XX. To have the Statute of Uses repealed.

"XXI. That the statutes of treasons for words and such like, made since anno 21 of our sovereign lord that now is, be in like wise repealed.

"XXII. That the common laws may have place, as was used in the beginning of your Grace's reign; and that all injunctions may be clearly decreed, and not to be granted unless the matter be heard and determined in Chancery.

"XXIII. That no man, upon subpoenas from Trent north, appear but at York, or by attorney, unless it be upon pain of allegiance, or for like matters concerning the king.

"XXIV. A remedy against escheators for finding of false offices, and extortionate fees-taking, which be not holden of the king, and against the promoters thereof."

A careful perusal of these articles will show that they are the work of

Robert Aske remaining on the bank of the Don, "the whole host standing with him in perfect array."¹ The conference lasted till the October day had closed in darkness. What destinies did not hang upon its issue? The insurgents it is likely might have forced the passage of the river; and although the river of time was running with too full a current for them or any man to have stayed its course, yet they might have stained its waters with streams of English blood; the sunrise of the Reformation might have been veiled in storms; and victory, when it came at last, have shone over gory battle-fields and mangled ruins.

Such was not the destiny appointed for England. The insurgents were deceived by their strength. They believed themselves irresistible, and like many others who have played at revolutions, dreamt that they could afford to be moderate.

It was agreed that Sir Robert Bowes and Sir Ralph Ellerkar should carry the articles to the king; that the Duke of Norfolk should escort them in person, and intercede for their favourable hearing. Meanwhile, and till the king's reply was known, there should be an armistice. The musters on both sides should be disbanded—neither party should "innovate" upon the *status in quo*.

The loyalists and the rebels alike expected to gain by delay. Letters from all parts of the kingdom were daily pouring in to Aske, full of gratitude, admiration, and promises of help.² He had leisure to organise the vast force of which the command had been thrust upon him, to communicate with the Emperor or with the regent's court at Brussels,³ and to establish a correspondence with the southern counties.

many hands, and of many spirits. Representatives of each of the heterogeneous elements of the insurrection contributed their grievances; wise and foolish, just and unjust demands were strung together in the haste of the moment.

For the original of this remarkable document, see Instructions to Sir Thomas Hilton, Miscellaneous Depositions on the Rebellion: *Rolls House MS.*

¹ Aske's Narrative; *Rolls House MS.*

² Lord Darcy to Somerset Herald: *Rolls House MS.*

³ The following letter was written by some person unknown to the Regent of the Low Countries. The original is in the Archives at Brussels.

— to Her Majesty the Queen Regent.

LONDON, October 1536.

MOST NOBLE LADY,—I am instructed to inform your Majesty that on Monday, the 2nd of this present October, in the northern counties in the diocese of Lincoln, the King's officers and commissioners were proceeding

The Duke of Norfolk escaped an immediate danger; agreeing in heart with the general objects of the rising, he trusted that the petition, supported by the formidable report which he would carry up with him, might bring the king to consent to a partial reaction; if not to be reconciled to the Pope, at least to sacrifice Cromwell and the heretical bishops.

The weight of the crisis now rested on Henry himself. Cromwell was powerless where his own person was the subject of contention. He had no friends—or none whose connection with him did not increase his danger—while by his enemies he

with the demolition of four abbeys, when certain peasants, by God's will, commenced a riot under the conduct of a brave shoemaker named William King.¹ The chief commissioner, Doctor Lee, who was especially obnoxious to the people, as the summoner who cited the late Queen, your aunt, now in glory, before the Archbishop of Canterbury, contrived to escape; but his cook was taken, and, as a beginning, the people hanged him. A gentleman belonging to the Lord Privy Seal, otherwise called Master Cromwell, tried to stop them; and he too was immediately laid hands on, wrapped in the hide of a newly-killed calf, and worried and devoured by the dogs; the mob swearing they would do as much for his master.

The people went next to the house of the Bishop of Lincoln, whom they could not find; but they caught his chancellor, and to spite the bishop, who is said to have been the first person to advise the King to divorce your aunt, they killed him.

The next day being Tuesday, there were more than ten thousand of them in arms; and they proceeded to take the gentlemen of the neighbourhood, and swear them to be true to their cause. The cobbler assumed a cloak of crimson velvet, with the words embroidered in large letters upon it, FOR GOD, THE KING, AND THE COMMONWEALTH. Some of the gentlemen who had been sworn escaped and gave notice to the King, and on Wednesday, at nine in the morning, an order came out that all the gentlemen in London should place themselves under the command of Richard Cromwell. The Lord Mayor undertook to provide horses, and went in person from stable to stable, borrowing on all sides from natives and foreigners alike. To appease the complaints which began to be heard, it was given out that the horses were required for the Count of Nassau, who, they pretended, had come over with a train of men as ambassador, and had nothing to mount them on. On Saturday the number of insurgents had risen to fifty thousand, and there were said to be as many as ten thousand priests among them who never ceased to stir them on to their work, and to tell them what great things they would achieve. The same day Lord Clinton's retinue joined them; Lord Clinton himself (it was he who married the Duke of Richmond's mother) had to fly with a single servant; and many other gentlemen were forced to fly also, who intended to have done service for the King.

When these news reached London, the King called a council; and immediately after the meeting, the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, and the other lords, dispersed in different directions, as it was said, to prevent the insurrection from spreading. The admiral and Sir Francis Brian went down to Ampthill, and collected about ten thousand men out of Northamptonshire and the counties adjoining. On Sunday the King was

¹ Nicholas Melton was the name of the man who was called Captain Cobbler.

was hated as an incarnation of Satan. He left his cause in the king's hands, to be supported or allowed to fall.

But the Tudor princes were invariably most calm when those around them were panic-stricken. From the moment that the real danger was known, the king's own hand was on the helm—his own voice was heard dictating his orders. Lincolnshire had again become menacing, and Suffolk had written despairing

said to be going to Ampthill also, and the royal standard was expected to be displayed. Sunday afternoon I saw thirty-four of the falconets which the king has been making during the last year leave the Tower of London. There was not shot or powder, however, that I could see, and they were badly provided with artillerymen. The next day, when they were drawn out of the City, the horses were found so bad, that, for want of better, thirteen of the guns went but a mile, and then returned to the Tower; while the remainder were taken but a small distance.

Men are hired, as many as can be obtained, in Kent and elsewhere; but the chances are that when in face of the enemy they will turn their coats, and join the rebels in their good quarrel. Those who have risen say they will live like their forefathers; they will maintain the abbeys and the churches, and pay no more imposts and subsidies. They demand the repayment of the sums which they have been forced to contribute already, especially the great loan exacted from them in the cardinal's time; and, finally, they will have surrendered into their hands the wool-comber (by whom they mean Cromwell), the tavern-keeper (which is their name for the Archbishop of Canterbury), and divers other bishops and lords of the council.

It was reported in London on Monday that the Earl of Northumberland's brother had joined the Commons with thirty thousand men. He wanted lately to be declared the earl's heir; the King made difficulties, and he now means to be revenged. It was also said that a number of other lords and great men had been forced to join, by a threat that they should have their houses pillaged; this has been done already with the houses of those who, after taking the oath, have deserted to the king. A priest and a shoemaker were stated to have been hanged the same morning for merely saying it was a pity to collect an army to put down such poor people. The King declared that they cared more for a set of rascals than for him.

Thursday morning a knight went down to the coast to fetch off the workmen employed by the King. The town of Sandwich also has provided sixty poorly furnished men-at-arms. The frontiers are now unprotected, and a landing can be easily effected. Even the French tailors in London are pressed to serve. They give them harquebusses and two groats a-day, making four ducats the month, for their pay, with a groat to drink for every five miles they march. The Flemish shoemakers are made to go on the same terms. To the English they give but sixpence a-day, with the same drink money they allow the French.

Madame, it appears to the person who has been sent to me by your Majesty, that it is good fishing in troubled waters; and that now, in these disturbances, there is an opportunity such as there has not been these hundred years, to take vengeance upon the schismatic for the wrongs which he has done with his French alliances to his Majesty the Emperor, for the injuries of your late aunt, his lawful wife, and for the iniquitous treatment of his patient daughter the Princess. A portion of the army now in readiness in Zealand would suffice to restore the Princess to her place and rank. Two thousand harquebuss men (it is of those that the need is greatest) should be landed at the mouth of the river which runs from York.

letters; the king told him "not to be frightened at his shadow."¹ The reactionary members of the council had suggested a call of parliament, and a proclamation that if any of the king's subjects could prove the late measures of the government to be against the laws of God or the interests of the commonwealth, these measures should be undone. They had begged, further, that his Highness would invite all persons who had complaints against Cromwell and the bishops to come forward with their proofs, and would give a promise that if the charges could be substantiated, they should be proceeded against and punished.² At such a crisis the king refused either to call a parliament to embarrass his hands, or to invite his subjects to argue against his policy. "He dared rather to testify that there never were in any of his predecessors' days so many wholesome, commodious, and beneficial acts made for the commonwealth: for those who were named subverters of God's laws he did take and repute them to be just and true executors of God's laws." If any one could duly prove to the contrary, they should be duly punished. "But in case," he said, "it be but a false and untrue report (as we verily think it is), then it were as meet, and standeth as well with justice that they should have the self-same punishment which wrongfully hath objected this to them that they should have had if they deserved it."³

On the 29th of October he was on the point of setting off from London; circulars had gone out to the mayors of the towns informing them of his purpose, and directing them to keep watch and ward night and day,⁴ when Norfolk reached the court with the two messengers.

Henry received them graciously. Instead of sending them back with an immediate answer, he detained them for a fortnight, and in that interval gained them wholly over to himself. With their advice and assistance he sent private letters among the insurgent leaders. To Lord Latimer and the other nobles he represented the dishonour which they had brought upon themselves by serving under Aske; he implored both them and the many other honourable men who had been led away to return to their allegiance, "so as we may not," he said, "be enforced to extend our princely power against you, but with

¹ Richard Cromwell to Lord Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. vii.

² Devices for the Quieting of the North: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 606.

³ *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 507-8.

⁴ Bundle of unassorted MSS. in the State Paper Office.

honour, and without further inconvenience, may perform that clemency on which we have determined." ¹

By infinite exertion he secured the services, from various parts of England, of fifty thousand reliable men who would join him on immediate notice; while into the insurgent counties he despatched heralds, with instructions to go to the large towns, to observe the disposition of the people, and, if it could be done with safety, to request the assistance of the mayor and bailiffs, "gently and with good words in his Grace's name." If the herald "used himself discreetly," they would probably make little difficulty; in which case he should repair in his coat of arms, attended by the officers of the corporation, to the market cross, and explain to the people the untruth of the stories by which they had been stirred to rebellion. The poorest subject, the king said, had at all times access to his presence to declare his suits to him; if any among them had felt themselves aggrieved, why had they not first come to him as petitioners, and heard the truth from his own lips. "What folly was it then to adventure their bodies and souls, their lands, lives and goods, wives and children, upon a base false lie, set forth by false seditious persons, intending and desiring only a general spoil and a certain destruction of honest people, honest wives, and innocent children. What ruth and pity was it that Christian men, which were not only by God's law bound to obey their prince, but also to provide nutriment and sustentation for their wives and children, should forget altogether, and put them in danger of fire and sword for the accomplishment of a certain mad and furious attempt." They could not recall the past. Let them amend their faults by submission for the future. The king only desired their good. He had a force in reserve with which he could and would crush them if they drove him to it; he hoped that he might be able only to show them mercy and pardon.² As to the suppression of the abbeys, the people should learn to compare their actual condition with the objects for which they were founded. Let them consider the three vows of religion—poverty, chastity, and obedience—and ask themselves how far these vows had been observed.³

¹ *Rolls House MS.* second series, 278.

² *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 476, and compare p. 500. The instructions varied according to circumstances. There were many forms of them, of which very few are printed in the *State Papers*. I extract from several, in order to give the general effect.

³ The king's words are too curious to be epitomised. The paper from which I here quote is written by his secretary, evidently from dictation,

Thus instructed, the heralds attempted to discharge their mission, and partially succeeded; but so hot a fever was not to be cooled on a sudden; and connected with the delay of the messengers, and with information of the measures which the king was procuring, their presence created, perhaps, more irritation and suspicion than their words accomplished good. The siege of Skipton continued; separate local insurrections were continually blazing; the monks everywhere were replaced in the abbeys; and Aske, who, though moderate, was a man of clear, keen decision, determined, since the king was slow in sending up his concessions, to anticipate them by calling a parliament and convocation of the northern notables, to sit at York.¹ "The king's treasure," which had fallen into his hands, gave him command of money; the religious houses contributed their plate; circulars were addressed to every parish and township, directing them to have their contingents ready at any moment to march; and, to insure a rapid transmission of orders, regular posts were established from Hull to Templehurst,

and in great haste. After speaking of the way in which the vow of chastity had been treated by the monks, he goes on—

"For the point of wilful poverty they have gathered together such possessions, and have so exempted themselves from all laws and good order with the same, that no prince could live in that quiet, in that surety, in that ease, yea, in that liberty, that they lived. The prince must carke and care for the defence of his subjects against foreign enemies, against force and oppression; he must expend his treasures for their safeguard; he must adventure his own blood, abiding all storms in the field, and the lives of his nobles, to deliver his poor subjects from the bondage and thrall of their mortal enemies. The monks and canons meantime lie warm in their demesnes and cloysters. Whosoever wants, they shall be sure of meat and drink, warm clothing, money, and all other things of pleasure. They may not fight for their prince and country; but they have declared at this rebellion that they might fight against their prince and country. Is not this a great and wilful poverty, to be richer than a prince?—to have the same in such certainty as no prince hath that tendereth the weal of his subjects? Is not this a great obedience that may not obey their prince and against God's commandment, against their duties of allegiance, whereto they be sworn upon the Holy Evangelists, will labour to destroy their prince and country, and devise all ways to shed Christian blood? The poor husbandman and artificer must labour all weathers for his living and the sustentation of his family. The monk and canon is sure of a good house to cover him, good meat and drink to feed him, and all other things meeter for a prince than for him that would be wilfully poor. If the good subject will ponder and weigh these things, he will neither be grieved that the King's Majesty have that for his defence and the maintenance of his estate, so that he shall not need to molest his subjects with taxes and impositions, which loiterers and idle fellows, under the cloke of holyness, have scraped together, nor that such dissimulers be punished after their demerits, if they will needs live like enemies to the common-wealth."—*Rolls House MS.* first series, 297.

¹ Sir Brian Hastings to Lord Shrewsbury: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 268.

from Templehurst to York, from York to Durham, from Durham to Newcastle. The roads were patrolled night and day; all unknown persons in town or village were examined and "ripped."¹ The harbour at Hull was guarded with cannon, and the town held by a strong garrison under Sir Robert Constable, lest armed ships from Portsmouth might attempt to seize it. Constable himself, with whose name we have already become familiar, was now, after Robert Aske and Lord Darcy, the third great leader of the movement.² The weather had changed, an early winter had set in, and the rivers either fell or froze; the low marsh country again became passable, and rumours were abroad that Darcy intended to surprise Doncaster, and advance towards Nottingham; and that Aske and Constable would cross the Humber, and, passing through Lincolnshire, would cut off Suffolk, and join him at the same place.³

The king, feeling that the only safety was in boldness, replied by ordering Lord Shrewsbury to advance again to his old position. The danger must have been really great, as even Shrewsbury hesitated, and this time preferred to hold the line of the Trent.⁴ But Henry would now hear nothing of retreat. His own musters were at last coming up in strength. The fortification of Hull, he said, was a breach of the engagement at Doncaster; and Vernon, one of the lords of the Welsh Marches, Sir Philip Draycote, and Sir Henry Sacheverell, going to Shrewsbury's assistance, the line of the Don was again occupied. The head quarters were at Rotherham, and a depôt of artillery and stores was established at Tickhill.⁵

In Suffolk's camp at Lincoln a suggestion was started whether Aske's attack might not be anticipated—whether, by a swift, silent enterprise, it might not be possible to seize and carry off both him and Sir R. Constable. Two volunteers were found who offered to make the experiment. One of them, Anthony Curtis, a cousin of Aske, "for private malice, said that if he might have licence, he would find sureties, and would either

¹ Sir Brian Hastings to Lord Shrewsbury: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 268.

² He was a bad, violent man. In earlier years he had carried off a ward in Chancery, one Anne Grysanis, while still a child, and attempted to marry her by force to one of his retainers.—*Rolls House MS.* second series, 434.

³ Sir Brian Hastings to Lord Shrewsbury: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 626.

⁴ Shrewsbury to the King: *MS. State Paper Office: Letters to the King and Council*, vol. v.

⁵ *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xxxvi.

kill his kinsman or be killed himself."¹ Another attempt for Aske's destruction was made by the Duke of Norfolk, who had no objection to a coalition of noblemen against Cromwell, but disdained the dictation of an unknown upstart. He supposed that he might tempt Lord Darcy to an act of treachery, and sent a questionable proposal to him by the hands of a servant of Lord Hussey, a certain Percival Cresswell. The attempt failed; but Cresswell's account of his mission is not a little curious.

He arrived at Templehurst on Friday, November the 10th, shortly before dinner. Lord Darcy was walking with Aske himself, who was his guest at the time, and a party of the commons in the castle garden. Cresswell gave him a letter from Norfolk, which was cautiously worded, in case it should fall into wrong hands, and said he was charged also with a private message. The danger of exciting suspicion was so great that Darcy had a difficulty in arranging a separate conversation. He took Cresswell into the castle, where he left him in an anteroom full of armed men. They gathered about him, and inquired whether Cromwell, "whom they called most vilipendiously," was put out of the king's council. He replied that the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Oxford, Lord Sussex, and Sir William Fitzwilliam were with the king. "God save the king!" they said; "as long as noblemen of the true blood rule about the king all will be well. But how of Cromwell? Is he put from the council or no?" Cresswell said that he was still on the council. "Then, whatsoever the Lord Darcy say to you," they answered, "show the king and the lords that until our petitions are granted we will take no pardon till we have our will." Darcy had by this time secured a private room and a few private moments. He called Cresswell in. "Now tell your message," he said. "The Duke of Norfolk desires you," announced the messenger, "to deliver up Aske, quick or dead, but if possible, alive; and you shall so show yourself a true subject, and the king will so regard you."² Darcy replied like a nobleman. He had given his faith, he said, and he would not stain his coat.³ He wrote a few lines to Norfolk—"Alas, my Lord!" his letter said, "that you, being a man of so great

¹ Suffolk to the King: *MS. State Paper Office: Letters to the King and Council*, vol. v.

² It is to be remembered that Darcy still *professed* that he had been forced into the insurrection by Aske. This is an excuse for Norfolk's request, though it would have been no excuse for Darcy had he consented.

³ Deposition of Percival Cresswell: *Rolls House MS. A 2*, 29.

honour, should advise or choose me to betray any living man, Frenchman, Scot, yea, or even Turk. To win for me or for mine heirs the best duke's lands that be in France, I would not do it to no living person."¹ The next morning, after mass, he again called Cresswell to him, and bade him tell the king that he had never done better service either to him or to his father than he was doing at that moment, and if there was to be peace, he recommended that the answer to the petition should be returned instantly.

The king had written more than one answer; but in each draught which he had made there was a reservation attached to the promise of a general pardon, excluding in one instance ten persons, in another, six, from the benefit of it;² and they were withdrawn all of them in deference to the protests of the Duke of Norfolk. Ellerkar and Bowes were dismissed on the 14th of November, "with general instructions of comfort."³ Norfolk himself, with other commissioners, would return to the north at the end of the month with a final reply.

The ill-humour of the insurgents was meanwhile increasing; division had begun to show itself; the people suspected the gentlemen, the gentlemen feared the people, and noisy demonstrations showed Aske that a state of inaction was too dangerous to continue. On the return of Bowes and Ellerkar a hasty council was called at York. The question was put whether they should wait or not for the arrival of the commissioners. Especial exasperation had been caused by a letter of Cromwell to Sir Ralph Evers, in which it was said that, "unless the commons would be soon pacified, there should be such vengeance taken that the whole world should speak thereof."⁴ It was proposed to cut short further parley, and leave the cause to be decided by the sword. Darcy had already selected an agent to the court of Brussels, to beg that arms and ammunition might be sent at once to Hull.⁵ Sir Robert Con-

¹ *MS. State Paper Office*, first series. Autograph letter of Lord Darcy to the Duke of Norfolk. It is unfortunately much injured.

² One of these is printed in the *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 506. The editor of these Papers does not seem to have known that neither this nor any *written* answer was actually sent. Amidst the confusion of the MSS. of this reign, scattered between the State Paper Office, the Rolls House, and the British Museum, some smothered in dirt and mildew, others in so frail a state that they can be scarcely handled or deciphered, far greater errors would be pardonable. The thanks of all students of English history are due to Sir John Romilly for the exertions which he has made and is still making to preserve the remnants of these most curious documents.

³ Henry VIII. to the Earl of Rutland: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 454.

⁴ Aske's Narrative: *Rolls House MS.*

⁵ *Rolls House MS.* first series, 1805; and see *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 558.

stable declared openly, "that if his advice might be taken, seeing he had broken one point in the tables with the king, he would yet break another, and have no meeting. He would have all the country made sure from Trent northward; he doubted not they would have joined with them all Lancashire and Cheshire, which would make them strong enough to defend themselves against all men; and then," he said, "he would be content to condescend to the meeting."¹

Had this advice been taken, the consequences might have been serious; but the fatal moderation of the leader prevailed over the more audacious but safer counsel. The terms offered by the government should be first discussed, but they should be discussed in security. The musters should reassemble in full force.² They had summoned a northern parliament and convocation. The two assemblies should sit at Pomfret and not at York, and should meet at the time of the conference.

Thus, on the 26th of November, as the king's commissioners approached the borders of Yorkshire,³ the news reached them that the beacons were again burning, and the force of the commons was again collecting. The conference, if conference there was to be, must be held with their hands on their sword-hilts. The black squadrons, with St. Cuthbert's banner, would be swarming on the banks of the Don as before.⁴ They had brought down extensive powers, but the king had refused absolutely to grant a complete pardon. Five or six of the worst offenders, he insisted, should be surrendered; and if the rebels were obstinate, Norfolk had been directed to protract the discussion, to win time by policy, that he might himself come to them; and in the meantime to consent to nothing, to promise nothing, and yet do and say nothing "which might give them warning and respite to fortify themselves."⁵

But the waters had fallen low; the ground was hard; the sharpest winter had set in which had been known for years. The force which Shrewsbury had with him could not now hold

¹ Deposition of John Selbury: *Rolls House MS. A 2*, 29.

² Sir Anthony Wingfield to the Duke of Norfolk: *Rolls House MS. first series*, 692.

³ The Duke of Norfolk, Sir William Fitzwilliam, Sir John Russell, and Sir Anthony Brown.

⁴ The Duke of Suffolk feared an even larger gathering: where heretofore they took one man, he warned Norfolk, they now take six or seven. *State Paper Office MS. first series*, vol. iii. Lord Darcy assured Somerset Herald that they had a reserve of eighty thousand men in Northumberland and Durham—which, however, the herald did not believe. *Rolls House MS.*

⁵ The King to the Duke of Norfolk: *Rolls House MS. first series*, 278.

its position in the face of the vast numbers which were collecting. When the number of the rebels who had reassembled was known, Sir John Russell was sent back from Nottingham to tell the king that his conditions could not be insisted upon, and to entreat him not only to grant the full pardon, but to promise also to hold a parliament in person at York.

Ignorant what the answer would be, Norfolk, with the other commissioners, went on to Doncaster, having prepared his way by a letter to Lord Darcy, to do away the effect of his late overtures.¹ He arrived at the town on the 28th of November. On Monday the 27th, the northern notables, laity and clergy, had assembled at Pomfret. Thirty-four peers and knights, besides gentlemen and extemporised leaders of the commons, sate in the castle hall;² the Archbishop of York and his convocation in Pomfret church. The discussions of the latter body were opened by the archbishop in a sermon, in which he dared to declare the meeting unlawful and the insurrection traitorous. He was swiftly silenced: a number of soldiers dragged him out of the pulpit, and threw him down upon the pavement. He was rescued and carried off by a party of his friends, or in a few more moments he would have been murdered.³ The clergy, delivered from his control, drew up a list of articles, pronouncing successively against each step which had been taken in the Reformation;⁴ and other articles simultaneously were drawn by the council in the hall. One by one, as the form of each was resolved upon, they were read aloud to the assembly, and were received with shouts of "Fiat! Fiat!"

Ten knights were then told off, and ten followers for every knight, to ride down to Doncaster and arrange the preliminaries of the meeting. They saw the duke on the day of his arrival; and on Wednesday the 29th, Lord Darcy, Robert Aske, and three hundred of the most eminent of their party, passed the

¹ *MS. State Paper Office.*

² The names of the thirty-four were—Lords Darcy, Neville, Scrope, Conyers, Latimer, and Lumley; Sir Robert Constable, Sir John Danvers, Sir Robert Chaloner, Sir James Strangways, Sir Christopher Danby, Sir Thomas Hilton, Sir William Constable, Sir John Constable, Sir William Vaughan, Sir Ralph Ellerker, Sir Christopher Heliyarde, Sir Robert Neville, Sir Oswald Wolstrop, Sir Edward Gower, Sir George Darcy, Sir William Fairfax, Sir Nicholas Fairfax, Sir William Mallore, Sir Ralph Bulmer, Sir Stephen Hamarton, Sir John Dauncy, Sir George Lawson, Sir Richard Tempest, Sir Thomas Evers, Sir Henry Garrowe, and Sir William Babthorpe.

³ Examination of John Dakyn: *Rolls House MS.* first series, p. 402.

⁴ They have been printed by STRYPE (*Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 266). Strype, however, knew nothing of the circumstances which gave them birth.

bridge of the Don with a safe conduct into the town. Wearing their pilgrim's badges, the five wounds of Christ crossed on their breasts, "they made obeisance on their knees before the duke and earls, and did humbly require to have the king's most merciful and free pardon for any their offences committed." This done, they presented their resolutions, on which they had just determined at Pomfret, and the discussion opened. The duke's hands were tied; he could undertake nothing. The debate continued till Saturday, "exceeding perplexed," messengers hurrying to and fro between Doncaster and Pomfret. At length, on Saturday, Sir John Russell came with the king's revised commission.

Against his judgment Henry had yielded to the entreaties of the Privy Council. He foresaw that to allow a commotion of such a kind to pass wholly unpunished, was to acknowledge a virtual defeat, and must encourage conduct which would soon lead to a repetition of the same scenes. He refused to admit that Norfolk was justified in his despondency. Skipton still held out. Lord Clifford and Sir William Musgrave had gained possession of Carlisle, and were raising men there. Lord Derby was ready to move with the musters of Cheshire and Lancashire. Besides Shrewsbury's forces, and the artillery at Tickhill, Suffolk had eight thousand men in high order at Lincoln. He "marvelled that Norfolk should write to him in such extreme and desperate sort, as though the world were turned upside down." "We might think," he said, "that either things be not so well looked on as they might be, when you can look but only to the one side; or else that ye be so perplexed with the brutes on the one part, that ye do omit to write the good of the other. We could be as well content to bestow some time in the reading of an honest remedy as of so many extreme and desperate mischiefs." Nevertheless, he said, if the rebels would be contented with the two concessions which Norfolk had desired—a free pardon and a parliament at York—these, but only these, might be made. No further engagements of any kind should or might be entered into. If more were insisted on, the commissioners should protract the time as skilfully as they could, and send secret expresses to Lord Derby and the Duke of Suffolk, who would advance by forced marches to their support.¹ With this

¹ Henry VIII. to the Duke of Norfolk: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 511. The council, who had wrung these concessions from the king, wrote by the same courier, advising him to yield as little as possible—"not to strain too far, but for his Grace's honour and for the better security of the commonwealth, to except from pardon, if by any means he might, a few evil persons,

letter he sent a despatch to Suffolk, bidding him hold himself in readiness, and instructing him at the same time to use his influence in the West Riding to induce the people to return to their allegiance, and permitting him to make liberal offers and promises in the name of his government.¹

The limitation of the new commission was as clear as language could make it. If the Duke of Norfolk committed himself more deeply, it was against the king's express commands, and in the face of repeated warnings.

On the day of Russell's arrival an agreement was made and signed. The pardon and the parliament were directly promised. It appears, certainly, that further engagements were virtually entered upon, or that words were used, perhaps intentionally vague, which were interpreted by the insurgents through their hopes and wishes. They believed, perhaps they were led to believe, that their entire petition had been granted;² they had accomplished the object of their pilgrimage, and they were satisfied.

As the conference closed, Aske again fell upon his knees, "and most humbly required the Duke of Norfolk and all the earls and lords of his part, to desire the lords of the north part to relinquish and refuse thenceforth to nominate him by the name of captain; and they promised: which done, the said Aske, in the presence of all the lords, pulled off his badge crossed with the five wounds, and in a semblable manner did all the lords there, and all others there present, saying all these words, 'We will wear no badge nor figure but the badge of our sovereign Lord.'"³ A fine scene . . . yet, as we sometimes witness with a sudden clearance after rain, leaving hanging vapours in the sky, indicating surely that the elements were still unrelieved.

The king had resolved on concession, but not on such concession as the Pomfret council demanded and Norfolk had seemed to promise. He would yield liberally to the substantial interests of the people, but he would yield little to their imagination and especially Sir Robert Constable."—*Hardwicke State Papers*, vol. i. p. 27.

¹ "You may of your honour promise them not only to obtain their pardons, but also that they shall find us as good and gracious lord unto them as ever we were before this matter was attempted; which promise we shall perform and accomplish without exception."—Henry VIII. to the Duke of Suffolk: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 476.

² Aske, in his Narrative, which is in the form of a letter to the king, speaks of "the articles now concluded at Doncaster, which were drawn, read, argued, and agreed among the lords and esquires" at Pomfret.—*Rolls House MS.*

³ Aske's Narrative: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28.

tive sympathies, and to the clergy and the reactionist lords he would not yield a step. The enclosures he intended should be examined, the fines on renewals of leases should be fixed, and the relations of landlord and tenant so moderated that "rich and poor men might live together, every one in his degree according to his calling."¹ The abbey lands would not be restored to the monks, but he saw the inconvenience of attaching them to the domains of the crown. They should be disposed of rapidly on terms favourable to the people and unfavourable to himself. In this direction he was ready to do all that he was desired to do; but undo the Reformation—never.

A remarkable state paper, in Cromwell's handwriting, indicates the policy which the king then intended. The northern parliament was to meet the following summer. There is not the smallest doubt that Henry meant to observe his own promises. He would be present in person. The queen would accompany him, and the opportunity would be taken for her coronation. Meanwhile, to clear up all misunderstandings, every nobleman and gentleman who had taken part in the insurrection was to be sent for, and should learn from the king himself the bearing of the measures against which they had clamoured, the motives which had led to the adoption of such measures, and the extent to which they would be further carried. A similar invitation should be sent to the principal persons in all other English counties, to come to London and give their advice on questions of social and local reform; and, further, to receive directions to try various experiments in such matters before the meeting of parliament, "that his Grace might see what fruit should succeed of them, and so alter and change as he should think meet." To do away with the suspicion that the government were favouring heresy, copies of the "Articles of Faith" were to be scattered liberally through England; select preachers were to be sent in sufficient numbers into the north to explain their meaning; and next there follows a passage which, as written by Cromwell, was a foreshadowing of his own fate.

"Forasmuch as the rebels made the maintenance of the faith one of the chief grounds and causes of the rebellion, it shall be necessary that the King's Highness, in the mean season, see his laws, heretofore taken for the establishment of an unity in the points of religion, put in such experience and execution in those parts as it may appear that his Grace earnestly mindeth and

¹ Instructions to the Earl of Sussex: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 299.

desireth an agreement specially in those things; which will not be done without his Highness do some notable act in those quarters for that purpose."

Finally, a lieutenant-general and a council should be permanently established at York as a court of appeal, empowered to hear and decide all local causes and questions. That the government might not again be taken by surprise, garrisons, Cromwell thought, might be established in the great towns, "in such order as they might be continued without hatred of the people." The ordnance stores should be kept in better preparation, and should be more regularly examined; and, above all, the treasury must be better furnished to meet unforeseen expenses, "experience showing that princes be not so easily served save where there is prompt payment for service rendered, and the honest labourer is not kept waiting for his hire."¹

¹ Scheme for the Government of the North: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 900. In connection with the scheme for the establishment of garrisons, a highly curious draft of an act was prepared, to be submitted to the intended parliament.

Presuming that, on the whole, the suppression of the monasteries would be sanctioned, the preamble stated (and the words which follow are underlined in the MS.) that—

"Nevertheless, the experience which we have had by those houses that are already suppressed sheweth plainly unto us that a great hurt and decay is thereby come, and hereafter shall come, to this realm, and great impoverishing of many the poor subjects thereof, for lack of hospitality and good householding that were wont in them to be kept, to the great relief of the poor people of all the counties adjoining the said monasteries, besides the maintaining of many smiths, husbandmen, and labourers that were kept in the said houses.

"It should therefore be enacted:

"1. That all persons taking the lands of suppressed houses must duly reside upon the said lands, and must keep hospitality; and that it be so ordered in the leases.

"2. That all houses, of whatsoever order, habit, or name, lying beyond the river of Trent northward, and not suppressed, should stand still and abide in their old strength and foundation.

"3. That discipline so sadly decayed should be restored among them; that all monks, being accounted dead persons by the law, should not mix themselves in worldly matters, but should be shut up within limited compass, having orchards and gardens to walk in and labour in—each monk having forty shillings for his stipend, each abbot and prior five marks—and in each house a governor, to be nominated by the king, to administer the revenue and keep hospitality.

"4. A thousand marks being the sum estimated as sufficient to maintain an abbey under such management, the surplus revenue was then to be made over to a court, to be called the *Curia Centenariorum*, for the defence of the realm, and the maintenance in peace as well as war of a standing army; the said men of war, being in wages in the time of peace, to remain in and about the towns, castles, and fortresses, within the realm at the appointment of the lord admiral, as he should think most for the surety of the realm."

A number of provisions follow for the organisation of the court, which

These well-considered suggestions were carried at once into effect. By the end of December many of the gentlemen who had been out in the insurrection had been in London; in their interviews with the king they had been won back to an unreserved allegiance, and had returned to do him loyal service. Lord Darcy and Sir Robert Constable had been invited with the rest; they had declined to present themselves: the former pretended to be ill; Constable, when the king's messenger came to him, "using no reverend behaviour nor making any convenable answer such as might have tended to his Grace's satisfaction," shut himself up in a remote castle on the Yorkshire coast.¹ Of the three leaders who had thrown themselves into the insurrection with a fixed and peremptory purpose, Aske alone, the truest and the bravest, ventured to the king's presence. Henry being especially desirous to see a man who had shaken his throne, paid him the respect of sending his request by the hands of a gentleman of the bedchamber. He took him now, he said, for his faithful subject, he wished to talk with him, and to hear from his own lips the history of the rising.²

Aske consulted Lord Darcy. Darcy advised him to go, but to place relays of horses along the road, to carry six servants with him, leaving three at Lincoln, Huntingdon, and Ware, and taking three to London, that in case the king broke faith, and make him prisoner, a swift message might be brought down to Templehurst, and Darcy, though too sick to pay his court to Henry, would be well enough to rescue Aske from the Tower.³ They would have acted more wisely if they had shown greater confidence. Aske went, however. He saw the king, and wrote out for him a straightforward and manly statement of his conduct—extenuating nothing—boasting of nothing—relating merely the simple and literal truth. Henry repeated his assurance to him that the parliament should meet at York; and Aske returned, hoping perhaps against hope; at all events, exerting himself to make others hope that the promises which they supposed to have been made to them at Doncaster would eventually be realised. To one person only he ventured to use

was to sit at Coventry as a central position, for the auditing the accounts, the employment of the troops, etc. The paper is of great historic value, although, with a people so jealous of their liberties, it was easy to foresee the fate of the project. It is among the *Cotton MSS. Cleopatra*, E 4 fol. 215.

¹ *Hardwicke State Papers*, vol. i. p. 38.

² *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 523.

³ Confession of George Lascelles: *Rolls House MS. first series*, 774.

other language. Immediately that he reached Yorkshire, he wrote to the king describing the agitation which still continued, and his own efforts to appease it. He dwelt upon the expectations which had been formed; in relating the expressions which were used by others, he indicated not obscurely his own dissatisfaction.

"I do perceive," he said, "marvellous conjecture in the hearts of the people, which is, they do think they shall not have the parliament in convenient time; secondly, that your Grace hath by your letters written for the most part of the honourable and worshipful of these shires to come to you, whereby they fear not only danger to them, but also to their own selves; thirdly, they be in doubt of your Grace's pardon by reason of a late book answering their first articles, now in print,¹ which is a great rumour amongst them; fourthly, they fear the danger of fortifying holds, and especially because it is said that the Duke of Suffolk would be at Hull, and to remain there; fifthly, they think your Grace intendeth not to accomplish their reasonable petitions by reason now the tenths is in demand; sixthly, they say the report is my lord privy seal² is in as great favour with your Grace as ever he was, against whom they most especially do complain;

"Finally, I could not perceive in all the shires, as I came from your Graces homewards, but your Grace's subjects be wildly minded in their hearts towards commotions or assistance thereof, by whose abetment yet I know not; wherefore, sir, I beseech your Grace to pardon me in this my rude letter and plainness of the same, for I do utter my poor heart to your Grace to the intent your Highness may perceive the danger that may ensue; for on my faith I do greatly fear the end to be only by battle."³

These were the words of a plain, honest man, who was convinced that his conduct had been right, that his demands had been wise, and was ready to return to rebellion when he found his expectations sliding away. Here, as so often in this world, we have to regret that honesty of purpose is no security for soundness of understanding; that high-hearted, sincere men,

¹ And for another reason. They were forced to sue out their pardons individually, and received them only as Aske and Lord Darcy had been obliged to do, by taking the oath of allegiance, and binding themselves to obey the obnoxious statutes so long as they were unrepealed.—*Rolls House MS. first series*, 471.

² Cromwell.

³ Robert Aske to the King: *MS. State Paper Office*, Royal Letters.

in these great questions, will bear themselves so perversely in their sincerity, that at last there is no resource but to dismiss them out of a world in which they have lost their way, and will not, or cannot, recover themselves.

But Aske, too, might have found a better fate, if the bad genius of his party had not now, in an evil hour for him and for many more, come forward upon the scene.

CHAPTER XIV

THE COMMISSION OF CARDINAL POLE

THERE were glad hearts at Rome when the news came that the English commons had risen for the Church. The Pope would lose no time in despatching his blessings and his help to his faithful children. His advances had been scorned—his hopes had been blighted—his offers of renewed cordiality had been flung back to him in an insulting act of parliament; the high powers, it seemed, had interfered at last to avenge his quarrel and theirs. Rumour painted the insurgents as in full triumph; but their cause was the cause of the world, and should not be left in their single hands. If France and the Empire were entangled in private quarrels, Scotland was free to act, and to make victory sure.

On Christmas eve, at St. Peter's, at the marvellous mass, when as the clock marked midnight, the church, till then enveloped in darkness, shone out with the brilliance of a thousand tapers, a sword and cap were laid upon the altar,—the sword to smite the enemies of the faith, the cap, embroidered with the figure of a dove, to guard the wearer's life in his sacred enterprise.¹ The enchanted offerings were a present of the Holy Father to James the Fifth; they were to be delivered in Scotland with the same ceremonials with which they had been consecrated; and at Rome prayers were sent up that the prince would use them in defence of Holy Church against those enemies for whom justice and judgment were now prepared; that, in estimating the value of the gifts, he would remember their mystic virtue and spiritual potency.²

The Scotch were, indeed, ill-selected as allies to the northern English, their hereditary enemies;³ but religion had reconciled

¹ "Deum deprecantes ut dextram ense firmet caputque tuum hoc pileo vi Spiritus Sancti per columbam figurati protegat."—Paulus III. Regi Scotiæ: *Epist. Reg. Pol.* vol. ii. p. 269.

² "Nec tam muneris qualitatem quam mysterium et vim spirituales perpendes."—*Ibid.*

³ Although the Doncaster petitioners had spoken of "their antient enemies of Scotland," an alliance, nevertheless, in the cause of religion, was not, after all, impossible. When James V. was returning from France

more inveterate antagonisms, and to the sanguine Paul, and his more sanguine English adviser, minor difficulties seemed as nothing, and vanished in the greatness of their cause.

Reginald Pole was now a cardinal. When hopes of peace with England had finally clouded he was invited to Rome. It was soon after announced that he was to be raised to high dignity in the Roman Church; and although he was warned that the acceptance of such a position would sanction the worst interpretation of his past proceedings, he contented himself with replying with his usual protestations of good meaning, and on the 20th of December he received a cardinal's hat.¹

His promotion, like the consecration of the cap and sword, was a consequence of the reports from England. He had been selected a representative of the Holy See on the outbreak of the rebellion which he had foretold, and he was armed with a rank adequate to his mission, and with discretionary instructions either to proceed to England or to the nearest point to it, in France or Flanders, to which he could venture.

The condition in which he might find his own country was uncertain. If the first rumours were correct, the king might be in the power of the insurgents, or, at least, be inclined to capitulate. It was possible that the struggle was still in progress—that the friends of the Church might require assistance and direction. It was necessary, therefore, to be provided for either contingency. To the Pope, with whom he had no disguise, and under whose direction he, of course, was acting, he spoke freely of his mission as intended to support the insurrection, that the people of England might have a leader near at hand of the old royal blood, with authority from the Pope to encourage

to Edinburgh, in the spring of 1537, his ship lay off Scarborough for a night to take in provisions—

"Where certain of the commons of the country thereabout, to the number of twelve persons—Englishmen, your Highness's servants" (I am quoting a letter of Sir Thomas Clifford to Henry VIII.)—"did come on board in the king's ship, and, being on their knees before him, thanked God of his healthful and sound repair; showing how that they had long looked for him, and how they were oppressed, slain, and murdered; desiring him for God's sake to come in, and all should be his."—*State Papers*, vol. v. p. 80.

¹ Among the records in connection with the entreaties and warnings of the Privy Council are copies of letters to the same effect from his mother and his brother. They are written in a tone of stiff remonstrance; and being found among the government papers, must either have been drafts which the writers were required to transcribe, or copies furnished by themselves as evidence of their own loyalty. Lady Salisbury's implication in the affair of the Nun of Kent may have naturally led the government to require from her some proof of allegiance.

them, yet beyond the reach of the tyrant's hand.¹ With the English government he manœuvred delicately and dexterously. At the end of December he wrote a respectful letter to Henry, making no allusion to any intended commission, but, in his capacity merely of an English subject, going over the points at issue between his country and the Papacy, and giving his reasons for believing the right to be with the See of Rome; but stating at the same time his desire "to satisfy his Majesty, or else to be himself satisfied," and offering "to repair into Flanders, there to discuss and reason with such as his Highness would appoint to entreat that matter with him."²

The proposal seemed so reasonable to Henry, that, if Pole, he said, was coming to Flanders really with no concealed intention, he would consent willingly; and persons were selected who should go over and dispute with him.³ The mask was carefully sustained. In his general correspondence with his friends, although he did not disguise his commission from the Holy See, or suggest as a possibility that he might himself be convinced in the intended discussion, yet he spoke beforehand of his expedition merely as a peaceful one; and since he intended to commence with argument, he perhaps conceived himself to be keeping within the letter of the truth.

As his legatine credentials, five pastoral epistles were prepared by Paul.

The first was an address to his well-beloved children in England, whose apostacy he knew to have been forced upon them, and who now were giving noble proof of their fidelity in taking

¹ Reg. Polus, Paulo Tertio: *Epist. Reg. Pol.* vol. ii. p. 46. The letter to which I refer was written in the succeeding summer, but the language is retrospective, and refers to the object with which the mission had been undertaken.

² "Perceiving by your last letters that there remaineth a little spark of that love and obedience towards his Majesty which your bounden duty doth require, and that by the same as well it appeareth your great suspicion is conveyed to one special point—that is, to the pretended supremacy of the Bishop of Rome—as that you shew yourself desirous either to satisfy his Majesty or to be satisfied in the same, offering yourself for that purpose to repair into Flanders, there to discourse and reason it with such as his Highness shall appoint to entreat that matter with you—for the hearty love and favour we bear to my lady your mother, my lord your brother, and others your friends here, which he right heartily sorry for your unkind proceedings in this behalf, and for that also we all desire your reconciliation to his Highness's grace and favour, we have been all most humble suitors to his Majesty to grant your petition touching your said repair into Flanders, and have obtained our suit in the same, so as you will come thither of yourself, without commission of any other person."—The Privy Council to Pole, Jan. 18, 1537: *Rolls House MS.*

³ *Ibid.*

arms for the truth. He lauded them for their piety; he exhorted them to receive, obey, and assist his excellent representative in the high work on which he was sent.

The second was to James of Scotland—a companion to another and more explicit letter which accompanied the cap and sword—commending Pole to his care, and again dwelling on the exploits which lay before him to execute in England.

The third and fourth were to Francis and the Regent of the Netherlands. The French and Imperial ambassadors had both been consulted on Pole's intended expedition, and both had signified their approval of it. Paul now implored the King of France to consider the interests which were compromised by the unhappy war in Europe, and to remember his duty as a Christian prince. He urged both Francis and the Regent Mary to receive Pole as they would receive himself, as engaged upon the deepest interests of Holy Church.

A last letter was to the Prince Bishop of Liège, claiming his general assistance, and begging him, should it be necessary, to supply the legate with money.

With these missives, and with purposes of a very plain character, Reginald Pole left Rome in February. France was his first object. The events in England of the few last weeks had prepared a different reception for him from that which he expected.

The king had not lost a moment in correcting the misconceptions which the Duke of Norfolk had permitted at Doncaster. The insurgents supposed that they had done good service to the commonwealth; the king regarded them as pardoned traitors who must reward his forgiveness by loyal obedience for the future. A chasm lay between the two estimates of the same subject, which would not readily be filled. The majority of the gentlemen had returned from their visit to London, converts to Henry's policy—or at any rate determined to support it. The clergy, and such of the people as were under their influence, remained a sullen minority. The intentions of the government were made purposely obvious. Large garrisons, with ammunition and cannon were thrown into Newcastle, Scarborough, and Hull. Royal officers penetrated the country where the power of the knights and nobles was adequate to protect them, compelling suspected persons to sue out their pardons by taking the oath of allegiance in a form constructed for the occasion.¹ The

¹ "They shall swear and make sure faith and promise utterly to renounce and refuse all their forced oaths, and that from henceforth they shall use

most conspicuous insurgents were obliged to commit themselves to acquiescence in all the measures against which they had risen. They had believed themselves victorious: they were enduring the consequences of defeat.

Loud outcries arose on all sides. The people exclaimed that they were betrayed by the gentlemen. The pardon was a delusion; "the king," they said, "had given them the fawcet and had kept the spigot."¹ The clergy were described as writhing with fury;² they had achieved their magnificent explosion; the smoke which had darkened the sky was clearing off, and the rock was not splintered. The opportunity was not, could not be gone; after all, it was only here and there that the treachery of the gentlemen would be fatal; the king had still but a comparatively inconsiderable force scattered in a few towns; the country generally was in a state of anarchy; the subsidy could not be collected; the monks remained in the abbeys in which they had been reinstated. The agitation began again, at particular points, to gather head.

Sir Francis Bigod, of Mogreve Castle, in Blakemore, was one of those persons who, in great questions, stand aloof from parties, holding some notion of their own, which they consider to be the true solution of the difficulty, and which they will attempt when others have failed; he was a spendthrift; his letters to Cromwell³ describe him as crippled with debt; he was a pedant; and had written a book on the supremacy, on an original principle;⁴ in the first rising, he said, he was "held in great suspect and jealousy because of his learning."

Mortified, perhaps, that his talents had not been appreciated, he now conceived that he had an occasion for the display of his powers. If the king had selected a leader for the insurgents

themselves as true and faithful subjects in all things; and that specially they shall allow, approve, support, and maintain to the uttermost of their power all and singular the acts, statutes, and laws which have been made and established in parliament since the beginning of the reign of our most dread Sovereign Lord."—*Rolls House MS.* first series, 471.

¹ Confession of George Lumley: *Rolls House MS.* first series.

² *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xix.

³ Many of them are in the *State Paper Office* in the Cromwell Collection.

⁴ John Hallam deposes: "Sir Francis Bigod did say, at Walton Abbey, that 'the king's office was to have no care of men's souls, and did read to this exáminate a book made by himself, as he said, wherein was shewed what authority did belong to the Pope, what to a bishop, what to the king; and said that the head of the Church of England must be a spiritual man, as the Archbishop of Canterbury or such; but in no wise the king, for he should with the sword defend all spiritual men in their right.'"—*Rolls House MS.* A 2, 29.

who would give a deathblow to their cause, he could not have made a better choice.

The council of the north was about to undertake its functions. The Duke of Norfolk was to be the first president, and was to enter upon his duties at the end of January.

Bigod, consulting only a few monks, a certain John Hallam, a retainer of Sir Robert Constable, and one or two other insignificant persons, imagined that before his arrival the vantage-ground of Doncaster might be recovered. Had Lord Darcy, or any capable person, been aware of his intentions, he would have been promptly checked; but he kept his secret, except among his own private confederates, till the 12th of January, when he sent out a sudden circular, through Durham and Richmondshire, inviting a muster at Settington. Discontent is an incautious passion. The clergy gave their help, and a considerable number of people collected, though knowing nothing of the object for which they had been called together.¹ Presently Sir Francis Bigod rode up, and mounting a hillock, addressed the crowd.

"He had invited them thither, he said, to warn them that, unless they looked to themselves, they would be all destroyed. Cleveland had risen, and other parts of the bishopric had risen, and all brave men must follow the example. The Duke of Norfolk was coming down with twenty thousand men. The gentlemen were traitors. The people were deceived by a pretended pardon, which was not a pardon, but a proclamation. None were to have the benefit of it, unless they took the king for supreme head of the Church; and that was against the Gospel. If, therefore, he said, you will take my part, I will take yours. You who will follow me, hold up your hands."²

They did not know Bigod; but in their humour they would have followed any one who had offered to lead them. Every hand went up. "Who will not go," they cried, "strike off his head!" "Now is the time to rise, or else never. Forward! forward! forward! forward now! on pain of death. Forward now, or else never; and we shall have captains just and true; and no gentlemen shall stay us." . . . The spent force of the great rising could still issue in noise, if in nothing else.

Among the crowd was the eldest son of Lord Lumley, taken

¹ Sir Francis Bigod's Confession: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 416. Confession of George Lumley: *Rolls House MS.* The MSS. relating to the later commotions are very imperfect, and much injured.

² Lumley's Confession.

there, if his own word was true, by little else than curiosity. Bigod saw him; and he was pitched upon to head a party to Scarborough, and seize the castle. He went unwillingly, with followers little better than a rabble. The townspeople were languid; the castle had been newly entrenched; the black mouths of cannon gaped between the parapets. The insurgents stood gazing for a few hours on their hopeless enterprise, and at the end Lumley stole away out of the town, and left his men to shift as they could. Hull and Beverley were to be attempted on the same day by Hallam and Bigod. In both cases they hoped to succeed by a surprise. At Hull it happened to be the market day. Hallam went thither in a farmer's dress, with twenty men, the party going in two and two to avoid causing suspicion. He calculated on the assistance of the crowd who would be collected by the market; but he soon discovered that he was mistaken, and that unless he could escape before his disguise was betrayed, he would be taken prisoner. He had gained the open country with two or three of his followers, when, on looking round, he saw the gates closing. "Fie!" some one cried, "will you go and leave your men behind you?" He turned his horse, intending a rescue. At that moment his bridle was seized; and though he drew his sword, and, with his servants made a few minutes' defence, he was overpowered, and carried to the town gaol.¹

Bigod's fortune was scarcely better. He succeeded in getting possession of Beverley; but the late leaders, whose names still possessed the most authority, Aske, Darcy, and Sir Robert Constable, lost not an instant in disclaiming and condemning his proceedings. His men fell away from him; he was obliged to fly, and he, too, soon after found himself a prisoner.

Nothing could have been more fortunate for the government, nothing more vexatious to all intelligent friends of the insurrection, than this preposterous outbreak. If the king desired to escape from the conditions of Doncaster, a fresh commotion furnished him with a fair excuse. Constable sent out orders,²

¹ Examination of John Hallam: *Rolls House MS. A 2, 29.*

² "The King's Highness hath declared by his own mouth unto Robert Aske, that he intendeth we shall have our parliament at York frankly and freely for the ordering and reformation of all causes for the commonwealth of this realm, and also his frank and free convocation for the good stay and ordering of the faith and other spiritual causes, which he supposes shall come down under his great seal by my Lord of Norfolk, who comes down shortly with a mean company after a quiet manner to the great quietness and comfort of all good men. Wherefore, good and loving neighbours, let us stay ourselves and by no means follow the wilfulness of such as are

imperiously commanding every one to remain quiet. The Duke of Norfolk, he said, was coming only with his private retinue to listen to the complaints of the people. The king was to follow at Whitsuntide, to hold a parliament in the midst of them. Their present folly was compromising their cause, and would undo their victory. To the king both he and Aske made the most of their exertions to preserve order, and received for them his thanks and acknowledgments.¹ Yet their position was full of danger; and to move either against the rising or in favour of it might equally injure them; they ruined Bigod; but the country people and the clergy, who were half inclined to suspect them before, saw in their circulars only fresh evidence of treachery;² their huge party, so lately with the organisation of an army, was gaping and splitting everywhere, and they knew not on which side to turn. Bigod's scattered followers appealed to Aske and Darcy for protection, and Aske at least ventured to engage his word for their pardons. Hallam, who was as popular as he was rash and headstrong, had been taken in arms, and was in the hands of the king's soldiers at Hull. They must either rescue him and commit themselves to fresh treason, or forfeit the influence which they retained. They consulted anxiously. It was still open to them to draw their swords—to fling themselves on the country, and fight out the cause which they saw too clearly was fading away. But they had lost the tide—and they had lost heart, except for half measures, the snare and ruin of revolutionists.

Aske ventured in person to Hull, and interceded, with indirect menaces, to prevent Hallam's execution; a step which com-

disposed to spoil and to undo themselves and you both, but to resist them in all that ye may, to the best of your power; and so will I do for my part, and so know I well that all good men will do; and if it had not been for my disease which hath taken me so sore that I may neither go nor ride, I would have come and have shewed you this myself for the good stay and quietness of you all, and for the commonwealth of all the country. The parliament and the convocation is appointed to be at York at Whitsuntide, and the coronation of the Queen's Highness about the same time.

"Written in Spaldingmore this 16th day of January.

"ROBERT CONSTABLE,
"of Flamborough."

—Letter of Sir R. Constable to the Commons of the North on Bigod's Insurrection: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 276.

¹ For this matter see *Rolls House MS.* first series, 276, 416, 1144, and *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 529.

² "Captain Aske was at London, and had great rewards to betray the commons; and since that he came home they have fortified Hull against the commons, ready to receive ships by the sea to destroy all the north parts."—Demands of the Rebels who rose with Sir F. Bigod: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 895.

promised himself, and could not benefit the prisoner.¹ The general consequences which he had foreseen all followed as a matter of course. "Bigod," he said bitterly, "had gone about to destroy the effect of the petition."² The Duke of Norfolk came at the end of the month; but, under fair pretext of the continued disorders, he brought with him an army, and an army this time composed of men who would do his bidding and ask few questions.³

On the 3rd of February he was at Pomfret. He was instructed to respect literally the terms of the pardon, but to punish promptly all offences committed since the issue of it. By the gentlemen he was eagerly welcomed, "being," he wrote, "in the greatest fear of the people that ever I saw men."⁴ The

¹ "Robert Aske, in a letter which he sent to Bigod, shewed that he would do the best he could for the delivery of Hallam. And that he spoke not that feignedly, it should appear that the said Aske, after that Bigod was fled, came to the king's commissioners then sitting at Hull about Hallam's examination, and shewed them how that he had heard of a great commotion that should be in the bishoprick and other places, and therefore advised them not to be hasty in proceeding to the execution of the said Hallam.

"Also divers that had been with Bigod in his commotion came to the said Aske, whom he did not apprehend, but bade them not fear, for he would get their pardon."—Deposition on the Conduct of Robert Aske, MS. much injured, *Rolls House*, first series, 416.

² *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28.

³ In the first surprise in October, the Privy Council had been obliged to levy men without looking nicely to their antecedents, and they had recruited largely from the usual depôts in times of difficulties, the sanctuaries. Manslayers, cutpurses, and other doubtful persons might have liberty for a time, and by good conduct might earn their pardon by taking service under the crown. On the present, as on many other occasions, they had proved excellent soldiers; and those who had been with Lord Shrewsbury had been rewarded for their steadiness. Under the circumstances he had perhaps been better able to depend upon them than on the more creditable portion of his force. After the pacification at Doncaster, Norfolk was ashamed of his followers; he proposed to disband them, and supply their place with penitent volunteers from Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. The king, who was already displeased with Norfolk for his other proceedings, approved no better of his present suggestion. "His Majesty," wrote the Privy Council, "marvels that you should be more earnest in the dissuasion of the retainers of them that have been but murderers and thieves (if they so have been), than you were that his Grace should not retain those that have been rebels and traitors. These men have done good rather than hurt in this troublous time, though they did it not with a good mind and intent, but for their own lucre. . . . What the others did no man can tell better than you. If these men may be made good men with their advancement, his Highness may think his money well employed. If they will continue evil, all the world shall think them the more worthy punishment for that they have so little regarded the clemency of his Highness calling them from their evil doings to honest preferment."—*Hardwicke State Papers*, p. 33.

⁴ Duke of Norfolk to the Earl of Sussex: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 534.

East Riding was tolerably quiet; but to the north all was in confusion. The Earl of Westmoreland was in London. The countess was labouring to keep order, "playing the part rather of a knight than of a lady," but with imperfect success. The Countess of Northumberland had also exerted herself nobly. But "there was never so much need of help," wrote Sir Thomas Tempest to Norfolk, "as now; Northumberland is wholly out of rule, and without order to be taken in Tyndal and Redesdale, all mischief shall go at large. The barony of Langley and Hexhamshire, taking example by them, be almost as evil as they be."¹ Similar information came in from Richmond and the Dales, and Westmoreland was in worse condition than either. In place of the disciplined army which had been at Doncaster, an armed mob was spread over the country, pillaging and burning. Happily the latter form of evil was the more easy to deal with. "The gentlemen be in such terror," Norfolk said, "that they be afraid to move for their defence." "It shall not be long," he added, "ere I will look on these commons;" nor were they slow in giving him an opportunity.

About the 12th of February a rabble from Kendal, Richmond, Hexham, Appleby, and Penrith, collected under one of the Musgraves, about eight thousand in number, and attacked Carlisle. They assaulted the walls, but were beaten back in confusion, and chased for many miles by Sir Thomas Clifford. Clifford's troops, hastily levied, contained a sprinkling of the professional thieves of the Border. The tendencies of these men getting the better of them, they began to pillage; and the rebels rallying, and probably reinforced, attacked them, and gained some advantage. Norfolk hurried to the scene, taking care to bring the southern levies with him;² and he trusted that he had at last found an opportunity of dealing a blow which would finally restore order, and recover Henry's confidence in him, which had been somewhat shaken. "I doubt not," he wrote to Cromwell, "so to use my company as it shall appear I have seen some wars. This pageant well played, it is likely all this realm shall be in better quiet during our lives. Doubt not, my lord, that I will adventure anything. I know too well what danger it should be to the whole realm if we were overthrown. Now shall appear whether for favour of these countrymen I

¹ *MS. State Paper Office*, first series, vol. iv.

² "I did not dare assemble the people of the country, for I knew not how they be established in their hearts, notwithstanding that their words can be no better."—Norfolk to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*.

forbare to fight with them at Doncaster, as ye know the King's Highness showed me it was thought by some I did. Those that so said shall now be proved false liars." ¹

The result of a battle in Norfolk's humour would have been serious to the rebels.² They felt it, and their courage failed them; they broke up in panic and dispersed. On inquiry, the last explosion, like the rest, was traced to the monks; those of Sawley, Hexham, Lanercost, Newminster, and St. Agatha, being the most guilty. The duke had the power in his hands, and was determined, once for all, to close these scenes. The impunity of the first insurrection had borne its natural fruits, and wholesome severity could alone restore quiet. Martial law was proclaimed in Durham, Westmoreland, Cumberland, and the northern angle of Yorkshire; arrests were made on all sides, and a courier was despatched to inform the king of the final flight of the insurgents, and of the steps which had been taken. Henry answered promptly, sending down his thanks to Sir Thomas Clifford and Sir Christopher Dacre, who had defended Carlisle, with his full approbation of Norfolk's conduct. "The further you wade," he said, "in the investigation of the behaviour of those persons that call themselves religious, the more you shall detest the great number of them. Our pleasure is, that before you shall close up our banner again you shall cause such dreadful execution to be done upon a good number of the inhabitants of every town, village, and hamlet that have offended, as they may be a fearful spectacle to all others hereafter that would practise any like matter, remembering that it should be much better that these traitors should perish in their unkind and traitorous follies, than that so slender punishment should be done upon them as the dread thereof should not be a warning to others. Finally, forasmuch as all these troubles have ensued by the solicitation and traitorous conspiracies of the monks and canons of those parts, we desire you at such places as they have conspired or kept their houses with force since the appointment at Doncaster, you shall, without pity or circumstance, cause all the monks and canons that be in any

¹ Norfolk to Cromwell: *MS. Ibid.*

² "This night I will send two or three hundred horse to them, and have commanded them to set fire in many places of the rebels' dwellings, thinking thereby to make them to steal away, and every man to draw near to his own for the safeguard of his house and goods. I have also commanded them that if the traitors so sparkle they shall not spare shedding of blood; for execution whereof I will send such as I am sure will not spare to fulfil my commandment."—Norfolk to Cromwell: *MS. Ibid.*

wise faulty, to be tied up without further delay or ceremony." ¹

The command was obeyed. Before the ordinary course of law was restored, seventy-four persons, laity and clergy, were hanged in various towns in Westmoreland and Cumberland.² The severity was not excessive, but it was sufficient to produce the desired result. The rebellion was finished. The flame was trampled out, and a touch of human pathos hangs over the close. I find among the records a brief entry that "the bodies were cut down and buried by certain women."³ Hallam and several of his followers were executed at Hull. Bigod, Lumley, and six others were sent to London, to await their trial with the Lincolnshire prisoners who were still in the Tower.

The turn of events promised ill for Reginald Pole, and the nature of his mission was by this time known in England. The fame had spread of the consecrated sword; and James had given fresh umbrage and caused additional suspicion by having married in the midst of the late events the Princess Magdalen of France, without consulting his uncle. The disturbances had been checked opportunely; but great as the danger was known to have been, a further peril had been on the rise to increase its volume. Pole had professed a desire for a reconciliation. The reconciliation, as Pole understood the word, was to be accomplished by the success of the rebellion which he was hastening to assist by all methods, natural and supernatural; and his affected surprise could scarcely have been genuine when he found himself proclaimed a traitor. Henry, by his success in England, had meantime recovered the judicious respect of foreign sovereigns. The French ambassador had promised the Pope a favourable reception for his legate at Paris. The legate, on his arrival at Lyons, met his first disappointment in the reports which reached him from his friends at home: approaching the French capital, he received a second and a worse, in an intimation from Francis that he would not be admitted to his presence; that unless he desired to find himself in the custody of his own government he must leave the kingdom immediately. In the treaties between France and England, a mutual promise to give no protection to political offenders was a prominent article. Henry had required Francis to observe his obligations,

¹ Henry VIII. to the Duke of Norfolk: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 537.

² Hall says, at Carlisle, but the official reports, as well as the king's directions, imply that the executions were not limited to one place.

³ *MS. State Paper Office*, first series, vol. ii.

and they could only be evaded by Pole's instant disappearance.

In the cruel blight of his hopes the legate had only to comply. He hastened to Cambray, and sending a courier with the Pope's letter to the Regent of the Netherlands, he avenged himself by childish complaints, which he poured out to Cromwell.¹ The King of France had been insulted—the sacred privileges of an ambassador had been violated by the monstrous demand for his surrender. He pretended to be ignorant that treaties are made to be observed, and that foreign courts can confer no sacred privilege on the subjects of other countries, as towards their own governments. He reached Cambray in the beginning of April, but he found in the Netherlands a scarcely more cordial reception than in France. He remained in that town under honourable but uneasy restraint till the end of May, when he was obliged to inform the Pope² that the regent was in so great

¹ "Of the mind of the king towards me I had first knowledge at mine arriving in France; of the which, to shew you the full motive of my mind herein, I was more ashamed to hear, for the compassion I had to the king's honour, than moved by any indignation that I, coming not only as ambassador, but as legate in the highest sort of embassy that is used among Christian princes, a prince of honour should desire another prince of like honour—'Betray the ambassador, betray the legate, and give him into mine ambassador's hands, to be brought unto me.' This was the dishonourable request, as I understand, of the king, which to me I promise you was no great displeasure, but rather, if I should say truth, I took pleasure therein, and said forthwith to my company that I never felt myself to be in full possession to be a cardinal as when I heard those tidings, whereby it pleased God to send like fortune to me as it did to those heads of the Church whose persons the cardinals do represent. In this case lived the apostles."—Pole to Cromwell: *STRYPE'S Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 326, etc.

² The value of Pole's accusations against Henry depends so much upon his character that I must be pardoned for scrutinising his conduct rather closely. In his letter to Cromwell, dated the 2nd of May, he insists that his actions had been cruelly misunderstood. Besides making the usual protestations of love and devotion to the king with which all his letters to the English court are filled, he declares, in the most solemn way, that, so far from desiring to encourage the insurgents, he had prevented the Pope from taking the opportunity of putting out the censures which might have caused more troubles. "That he had sent at that time his servant purposely to offer his service to procure by all means the king's honour, wealth, and greatness, animating, besides, those that were chief of his nearest kin to be constant in the king's service."—*STRYPE'S Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 321.

I shall lay by the side of these words a passage from his letter to the Pope, written from Cambray on the 18th of the same month.

Both the French and Flemish councils, he says, are urging him to return to Italy:—

"Eo magis quod causa ipsa quæ sola me retinere posset, et quæ huc sola traxit, ne spem quidem ullam ostendere videtur vel minimo periculo dignam, cur in his locis diutius maneam, populi tumultu qui causam ipsam

awe and fear of "that adversary," the King of England, that she no more dared to receive him than Francis; that he lived in daily fear of being taken prisoner and sent to London, and the utmost favour on which she could venture was to send him under an escort to Liège. To Liège, therefore, he was obliged to retire, and there for the present the bishop's hospitality allowed him to remain. If his journey had been attended with no other consequences but his own mortification it would scarcely have required to be noticed. Unhappily it was followed by, and probably it occasioned, the destruction of more than one brave man for whom we could have desired a better fate. While at Liège, and even from his entry into France, it is evident, from his letters to the Pope,¹ that he maintained an active correspondence with England. Whether intercepted despatches found their way into the hands of Cromwell, or whether his presence in the neighbourhood invited suspicion, and suspicion led to discovery, is uncertain; we find only that simultaneously with Pole's arrival at Cambray, Robert Aske, Lord Darcy, and Sir Robert Constable were arrested and taken to the Tower. On mid-Lent Sunday Aske had sent out his letters to "the captains" of various districts, and meetings had been held in consequence.² I am unable to ascertain either the objects or the results of these meetings; but "to summon the king's lieges" for any object after the restoration of quiet was an act of the highest imprudence. In Easter week there was an obscure insurrection in Cleveland. Sir John and Lady Bulmer (or

fovebat ita sedato ut multi supplicio sint affecti, duces autem omnes in regis potestatem venerint."

He goes on to say that the people had been in rebellion in defence of their religion. They had men of noble birth for their leaders; and nothing, it was thought, would more inspirit the whole party than to hear that one of their own nation was coming with authority to assist their cause; nothing which would strike deeper terror into their adversaries, or compel them to more equitable conditions.

For the present the tumult was composed, but only by fair words, and promises which had not been observed. A fresh opportunity would soon again offer. Men's minds were always rather exasperated than conquered by such treatment. The people would never believe the king's word again; and though for the moment held down by fear, would break out again with renewed fury. He thought, therefore, he had better remain in the neighbourhood, since the chief necessity of the party would be an efficient leader; and to know that they had a leader ready to come to them at any moment, yet beyond the king's reach, would be the greatest encouragement which they could receive.—Reginald Pole to the Pope: *Epist. Reg. Pol.* vol. ii. p. 46.

¹ *Epist. Reg. Pol.* vol. ii. p. 46.

² Bishop Hilsey to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xxxv.

Margaret Cheyne, as she is termed in her indictment) had been invited to London. Lady Bulmer was proved to have said that she would as soon be torn in pieces as go to London unless the Duke of Norfolk's and Sir Ralph Ellerkar's heads were off, and then she might go where she would at the head of the commons. Her chaplain confessed to a plot between the lady, her husband, and other persons, to seize and carry off Norfolk to Wilton Castle;¹ but in the evidence which I have discovered there is nothing to implicate either Aske or his two friends in this project.

That after the part which the latter had played they should have been jealously watched, that actions of doubtful bearing should be construed to their disfavour, was no more than they had a right to expect. Narrow interpretations of conduct, if severe, are inevitable with men who in perilous times thrust themselves into revolutionary prominence. To estimate their treatment fairly, we must ascertain, if possible, from the fragments of surviving informations against them, whether they really showed symptoms of fresh treasonable intent, or whether they were the victims of the irritation created by Pole's mission, and were less punished for their guilt than because they were dangerous and powerful. The government insisted that they had clear proof of treason;² yet the word "treason" as certainly bore a more general meaning in Cromwell's estimate, than in the estimate of those who continued to regard the first pilgrimage as good service to the state. To the government it was a crime to be expiated by active resistance of all similar attempts, by absolute renunciation of its articles; and in contrast to the great body of the northern gentlemen, a few possessed of wide influence continued to maintain that they had done well, if they continued to encourage the people to expect that their petitions would be granted, if they discouraged a renewal of the commotions, avowedly because they would injure the cause; it is certain that by a government surrounded by conspiracy, and emerging with difficulty out of an arduous

¹ *Rolls House MS.* first series, 416; much injured.

² The Privy Council, writing to the Duke of Norfolk, said: "You may divulge the cause of their activity to the people of those parts, that they may the rather perceive their miserable fortune, that, being once so graciously pardoned, would eftsoons combine themselves for the attempting of new treasons . . . not conceiving that anything is done for their former offences done before the pardon, which his Grace will in nowise remember or speak of; but for those treasons which they have committed again since in such detestable sort as no good subject would not wish their punishment for the same."—*Hardwicke State Papers*, vol. i. p. 43.

position, yet determined to persevere in the policy which had created the danger, such men would be regarded with grave suspicion, even if compromised by no further overt acts of disloyalty.

But it can scarcely be said that they were wholly uncompromised. Through the months of February and March a series of evidence shows Aske, Darcy, Sir Robert Constable, a gentleman named Levening, and several others, holding aloof as an isolated group, in close and continued intercourse, yet after Bigod's capture taking no part in the pacification of the country. These men repeatedly, in public and private, assured the people that the Doncaster articles must be conceded. They were in possession of information respecting the risings in Westmoreland and Cleveland, and yet gave no information to the government. In an intercepted letter to Lord Darcy Aske spoke of himself as having accomplished a great enterprise—"as having played his part, and all England should perceive it."¹ It was proved that Darcy, when commanded in January to furnish Pomfret with stores, had repeated his former neglect—that he and Aske were still in secret possession of cannon belonging to the government, which they had appropriated in the rebellion, and had not restored—that Aske had interfered with the authorities at Hull to prevent the punishment of traitors taken in arms²—that Constable, in a letter to Bigod, told him that he had chosen a wrong time of the year, that he ought to have waited till the spring³—that Lord Darcy had been heard to say that it was better to rule than be ruled—"and that where before they had had but two sovereign crowns they would now have four."⁴

The lightest of these charges were symptoms of an animus⁵

¹ *Rolls House MS. A 2, 28.*

² Besides his personal interference, Aske, and Constable also, had directed a notorious insurgent named Rudstone, "in any wise to deliver Hallam from Hull."—*Rolls House MS. A 2, 28.*

³ Sir Ralph Ellerkar called on Constable to join him in suppressing Bigod's movement. Constable neither came nor sent men, contenting himself with writing letters.—*Rolls House MS. A 2, 28.*

⁴ Part of Pole's mission was to make peace between France and the Empire. The four sovereigns would, therefore, be the Pope, the King of Scotland, Francis, and Charles. I have gathered these accusations out of several groups among the *Rolls House MSS.*, apparently heads of information, Privy Council minutes, and drafts of indictments. The particulars which I have mentioned being repeated frequently in these papers, and with much emphasis, I am inclined to think that they formed the whole of the case.

⁵ The proofs of "an animus" were severely construed.

A few clauses from a rough draught of the indictments will show how

which the crown prosecutors would regard as treasonable. The secretion of the artillery and Aske's conduct at Hull would ensure a condemnation where the judges were so anxious to condemn.

The materials for the prosecution were complete. It remained to proceed with the trials. But I must first mention the fate of the prisoners from Lincolnshire, who had been already disposed of. In their case there was not the complication of a pardon. They had been given up hot-handed by their confederates, as the principal instigators of the rebellion. More than a hundred seem to have been sent originally to the Tower. Upwards of half of these were liberated after a short imprisonment. On the 6th of March Sir William Parr, with a special commission, sat at Lincoln, to try the Abbot of Kirkstead, with thirty of the remainder. The Lincoln jury regarded the prisoners favourably; Thomas Moigne, one of the latter, spoke in his defence for three hours so skilfully, according to Sir William Parr's report, that "but for the diligence of the king's serjeant," he and all the rest would have been acquitted. Ultimately the crown secured their verdict: the abbot, Moigne, and another were hanged on the following day at Lincoln, and four others a day or two later at Louth and Horncastle.¹ The commission petitioned for the pardon of the rest. After a delay of a few weeks the king consented, and they were dismissed.²

Twelve more, the Abbot of Barlings, one of his monks, and others who had been concerned in the murder of the chancellor, were then brought to the bar in the Guildhall. They had no claim to mercy; and they found none. They were hung small a prospect of escape there was for any one who had not resolutely gone over to the government.

Aske wrote to the commons of the north a letter, in which was written, "Bigod intendeth to destroy the effect of our petition and commonwealth; whereby," Cromwell concluded, "it appeareth he continued in his false opinion and traitorous heart."

In another letter he had said to them, "Your reasonable petitions shall be ordered by parliament," "showing that he thought that their petitions were reasonable, and in writing the same he committed treason."

Again, both Constable and he had exhorted the commons to wait for the Duke of Norfolk and the parliament, telling them that the duke would come only with his household servants; "signifying plainly that, if their unreasonable requests were not complied with, they would take the matter in their own hands again."

There are fifty "articles" against them, conceived in the same spirit, of more or less importance.

¹ Sir William Parr to Henry VIII.: *MS. State Paper Office, Letters to the King and Council*, vol. v. *Rolls House MS. first series*, 76.

² Sir William Parr to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office, second series*, vol. xxxi.

on gibbets, at various towns, in their own county, as signs and warnings. Lord Hussey was tried by the peers. He was guilty obviously of having fled from a post which he was bound to defend. He had obstructed good subjects, who would have done their duty, had he allowed them; and he had held communication with the rebels. His indictment¹ charges him with acts of more direct complicity, the evidence of which I have not discovered. But wherever a comparison has been possible, I have found the articles of accusation in so strict accordance with the depositions of witnesses, that the absent link may be presumed to have existed. The construction may be violent; the fact is always true. He, too, was found guilty, and executed.²

With Lord Hussey the Lincolnshire list was closed. Out of fifty or sixty thousand persons who had been in armed rebellion, the government was satisfied with the punishment of twenty. The mercy was perhaps in part dictated by prudence.

The turn of the northern men came next. There were three sections of them—Sir Francis Bigod, George Lumley, and those who had risen in January in the East Riding; Sir Thomas Percy, the Abbot of Fountains, the Abbot of Jervaulx, Sir John and Lady Bulmer, Sir Ralph Bulmer, and Sir Stephen Hamarton, who had been concerned in the separate commotions since suppressed by the Duke of Norfolk; and, finally, Aske, Constable, and Lord Darcy, with their adherents. In this instance the proceedings were less simple than in the former, and in some respects unusual. The inferior offenders were first tried at York. The indictments were sent in to the

¹ *Baga de Secretis.*

² Lord Hussey may have the benefit of his own denial. Cromwell promised to intercede for him if he would make a true confession. He replied thus:—

"I never knew of the beginning of the commotion in neither of the places, otherwise than is contained in the bill that I did deliver to Sir Thomas Wentworth, at Windsor. Nor I was never privy to their acts, nor never aided them in will, word, nor deed. But if I might have had 500 men I would have fought with them, or else I forsake my part of heaven; for I was never traitor, nor of none counsel of treason against his Grace; and that I will take my death upon, when it shall please God and his Highness."

In a postscript he added:

"Now at Midsummer shall be three years, my Lord Darcy, I, and Sir Robert Constable, as we sate at the board, it happened that we spake of Sir Francis Bigod, (how) his priest, in his sermons, likened Our Lady to a pudding when the meat was out, with many words more; and then my Lord Darcy said that he was a naughty priest; let him go; for in good sooth I will be none heretic; and so said I, and likewise Sir Robert Constable; for we will die Christian men."—*MS. State Paper Office, second series, vol. xviii.*

grand jury; and in the important case of Levening, the special confederate of Aske and Darcy, whose guilt was identical with theirs, no bill was found. The king, in high displeasure, required Norfolk to take some severe notice of this obstruction of justice. Norfolk remonstrated; and was requested, in sharper language, to send up a list of the jurors,¹ and unravel, if possible, the cause of the acquittal. The names were forwarded. The panel was composed of fifty gentlemen, relatives, most of them, of one or other of the accused persons, and many among whom had formed part of the insurgent council at Pomfret.² Levening's escape was explained; and yet it could not be remedied. The crown was forced to continue its prosecutions, apparently with the same difficulty, and under the same uncertainty of the issue. When the trials of the higher offenders were opened in London, true bills had first to be found against them in their own counties; and the foremen of the two grand juries (for the fifty were divided into two bodies of twenty-five each) were Sir James Strangways and Sir Christopher Danby, noted, both of them, on the list which was forwarded to the crown, as relatives of Lord Darcy, Sir Francis Bigod, and Sir John Bulmer.³

On the 9th of May, however, either through intimidation or the force of evidence, the sixteen prisoners who were in the Tower, Lord Darcy, Robert Aske, Sir Robert Constable, and thirteen more, were delivered over for their trials. In the six preceding weeks they had been cross-examined again and again. Of the many strange scenes which must have taken place on these occasions, one picture, but a striking one, is all which I have found. It occurred at the house of the lord chancellor, in the presence of the Privy Council and a crowded audience. Darcy was the subject of examination. Careless of life, and

¹ "And whereas your lordship doth write that, in case the consciences of such persons as did acquit Levening should be examined, the fear thereof might trouble others in like case, the King's Majesty considering his treason to be most manifest, apparent, and confessed, and that all offenders in that case be principals, and none accessories, doth think it very necessary that the means used in that matter may be searched out, as a thing which may reveal many other matters worthy his Highness's knowledge; and doth therefore desire you not only to signify their names, but also to travel all that you can to beat out the mystery."—Privy Council to the Duke of Norfolk: *Hardwicke State Papers*, vol. i. p. 46.

² The list is in the *Rolls MS.* first series, 284. Opposite the name of each juror there is a note in the margin, signifying his connections among the prisoners.

³ Compare *Baga de Secretis*, pouch x. bundle 2, and *Rolls House MS.* first series, 284.

with the prophetic insight of dying men, he turned, when pressed with questions, to the lord privy seal:—

"Cromwell," he said, "it is thou that art the very special and chief causer of all this rebellion and mischief, and art likewise causer of the apprehension of us that be —, ¹ and dost daily earnestly travel to bring us to our ends, and to strike off our heads. I trust that ere thou die, though thou wouldest procure all the noblemen's heads within the realm to be stricken off, yet shall there one head remain that shall strike off thy head." ²

Of Aske, too, we catch glimpses which show that he was something more than a remarkable insurgent leader: a short entry tells us that six or seven days after his arrest, "his servant, Robert Wall (let his name be remembered), did cast himself upon his bed and cried, 'Oh, my master! Oh, my master! they will draw him, and hang him and quarter him;' and therewith he did die for sorrow." ³ Aske had lost a friend when friends were needed. In a letter which he wrote to Cromwell, he said that he had been sent up in haste without clothes or money, that no one of his relations would help him, and that unless the king would be his good and gracious lord, he knew not how he would live. ⁴ His confessions during his imprisonment were free and ample. He asked for his life, yet with a dignity which would stoop to no falsehood, and pretend to no repentance beyond a general regret that he should have offended the king. Then, as throughout, he showed himself a brave, simple, noble-minded man.

But it was in vain; and fate was hungry for its victims. The bills being found, Darcy was arraigned before twenty-two peers, and was condemned, Cromwell undertaking to intercede for his life. ⁵ The intercession, if made, was not effectual. The fifteen commoners, on the same day, were tried before a special commission in Westminster Hall. Percy, Hamarton, Sir John and Lady Bulmer pleaded guilty. The prosecution against Sir Ralph Bulmer was dropped: a verdict was given without difficulty against Aske, Constable, Bigod, Lumley, and seven more. Sixteen knights, nobles, and gentlemen, who a few months before were dictating terms to the Duke of Norfolk, and threatening to turn the tide of the Reformation, were condemned criminals waiting for death.

¹ Word illegible in the MS.

² MS. in Cromwell's own hand: *Rolls House*, A 2, 29, fol. 160 and 161.

³ *Rolls House MS.* first series, 207.

⁴ MS. *ibid.* 1401.

⁵ Depositions relating to Lord Delaware: *Rolls House MS.*

The executions were delayed from a doubt whether London or York should be the scene of the closing tragedy. There remain some fragments written by Darcy and Aske in the interval after their sentence. Darcy must have been nearly eighty years old; but neither the matter nor the broad, large, powerful handwriting of the following words show signs of agitation:—

“After judgment given, the petition of Thomas Lord Darcy to the King’s Grace, by my Lord Privy Seal.

“First to have confession; and at a mass to receive my Maker, that I may depart like a Christian man out of this vale of misery.

“Second, that incontinent after my death my whole body may be buried with my late wife, the Lady Neville, in the Freers at Greenwich.

“Third, that the straitness of my judgment may be mitigated after the king’s mercy and pleasure.

“Fourth, that my debts may be paid according to a schedule enclosed.”¹

Aske, in a few lines addressed also to Cromwell, spoke of his debts, and begged that some provision might be made for his family. “They,” he said, “never offended the King’s Grace, nor were with me in council in no act during all this time, but fled into woods and houses. Good my Lord, extend your pity herein. And I most humbly ask the King’s Highness, and all his council and lords, lowly forgiveness for any mine offences or words attempted or said against his Grace or any of them any time of my life; and that his Grace would save my life, if it be his pleasure, to be his bedesman—or else—to let me be full dead or that I be dismembered, that I may piously give my spirit to God without more pain; and that I desire for the honour of God and for charity.”²

The requests relating to the manner of the executions, it is satisfactory to find, were granted; and not only in the case of the two petitioners, but so far as I can learn in that of all the other sufferers. Wherever the scaffold becomes visible, the rope and the axe are the sole discernible implements of death. With respect to the other petition, I find among loose memoranda of Cromwell an entry “for a book to be made of the wives and poor children of such as have suffered, to the intent his Grace may extend his mercy to them for their livings as to his Highness

¹ *MS. State Paper Office, Domestic*, vol. xii.

² *Ibid.*

shall be thought convenient, and for payment of their debts." ¹ The "mercy" seems to have been liberal. The forfeited properties, on the whole, were allowed to descend without diminution, in their natural order.²

After some discussion it was settled that Darcy should suffer on Tower Hill; and he was executed on the 20th of June. Sir Thomas Percy, Bigod, the abbots of Fountains and Jervaulx, Hamarton, Sir John Bulmer, young Lumley, and Nicholas Tempest were hanged at Tyburn; four who had been tried with them and condemned were pardoned. Lady Bulmer died the dreadful death awarded by the English law to female treason.³ "On the Friday in Whitsun week," wrote a town correspondent of Sir Henry Saville, "the wife of Sir John Bulmer was drawn without Newgate to Smithfield and there burned:" and the world went its light way, thinking no more of Lady Bulmer than if she had been a mere Protestant heretic: the same letter urged Saville to hasten to London for the pleasures of the season, suggesting that he might obtain some share in the confiscated estates, of which the king would be soon disposing.⁴ Aske and Sir Robert Constable were to be sent down to Yorkshire. The king had been compelled, by the succession of fresh disorders and the punishments which had followed, to relinquish his intention of holding a summer parliament there. The renewed disturbances had released him from his promise, and the discussion which would inevitably have been opened, would have been alike irritating and useless. He had thought subsequently of going to York on progress, and of making his presence the

¹ *MS. Cotton. Titus, B 1, 457.*

² For instance, Sir Thomas Percy's eldest son inherited the earldom of Northumberland; unfortunately, also his father's politics and his father's fate. He was that Earl of Northumberland who rose for Mary of Scotland against Elizabeth.

³ Lady Bulmer seems from the depositions to have deserved as serious punishment as any woman for the crime of high treason can be said to have deserved. One desires to know whether in any class of people there was a sense of compunction for the actual measure inflicted by the law. The following is a meagre, but still welcome, fragment upon this subject:—

"Upon Whitsunday, at breakfast, certain company was in the chauntry at Thame, when was had speech and communication of the state of the north country, being that proditors against the King's Highness should suffer to the number of ten; amongst which proditors the Lady Bulmer should suffer. There being Robert Jones, said it is a pity that she should suffer. Then to that answered John Strebilhill, saying it is no pity, if she be a traitor to her prince, but that she should have after her deserving. Then said Robert Jones, let us speak no more of this matter; for men may be blamed for speaking of the truth."—*Rolls House MS. first series 1862.*

⁴ *MS. State Paper Office*: — to Henry Saville.

occasion of an amnesty; the condition of the Continent, however, the large armies, French and Imperial, which were in the field in the neighbourhood of Calais, the possibility or the alarm that the Pope might succeed in reconciling and directing them upon England, and still more the pregnancy of the queen and the danger of some anxiety which might cause the loss of the child, combined to make so distant a journey undesirable. These at least were the reasons which he alleged to the world. His chief ground, however, as he stated in private, was the increasing infirmity of his own health and the inhibition of his physician.¹ He resolved, therefore, that Norfolk, and not himself, should "knit up the tragedy," by conducting the last executions on the scene of the rebellion, and after they were over, by proclaiming a final and general pardon.

At the beginning of July the two remaining prisoners were placed in the custody of Sir Thomas Wentworth. They were paraded in formal state through the eastern counties, and at each town a few words of warning were addressed on the occasion to the people. Wentworth brought them thus to Lincoln, where they were delivered over to the Duke of Norfolk. Constable suffered first. He was taken to Hull,² and there hanged in chains.³ Before his death he said that, although he had declared on his examination that he had revealed everything of importance which he knew, yet he had concealed some matter connected with Lord Darcy for fear of doing him an injury. "He was in doubt whether he had offended God in receiving the sacrament in such manner, concealing the truth upon a good purpose."⁴ This secret, whatever it was, he carried with him

¹ A second cause "is our most dear and most entirely beloved wife the queen, being now quick with child, for the which we give most humble thanks to Almighty God, albeit she is in every condition of that loving inclination and reverend conformity, that she can in all things well content, satisfy, and quiet herself with that thing which we shall think expedient and determine; yet, considering that, being a woman, upon some sudden and displeasing rumours and brutes that might be blown abroad in our absence, she might take impressions which might engender danger to that wherewith she is now pregnant, which God forbid, it hath been thought necessary that we should not extend our progress this year so far from her."—Henry VIII. to the Duke of Norfolk: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 552.

² *MS. Rolls House*, A 2, 28.

³ A curious drawing of Hull, which was made about this time, with the plans of the new fortifications erected by Henry, is in the Cotton Library. A gallows stands outside the gate, with a body hanging on it, which was probably meant for Constable's.

⁴ "Immediately tofore Sir Robert Constable should receive his rights, it was asked of him if that his confession put in writing was all that he did know. To which he made answer that it was all. Notwithstanding he knew, besides that, sundry naughty words and high cracks that my Lord

from the world. His own offences he admitted freely, protesting, however, that he had added nothing to them since the pardon.

A fuller account remains of the end of Aske. He, too, like Constable, had some mystery on his conscience which he would not reveal. In a conversation with his confessor he alluded to Darcy's connection with the Spanish ambassador; he spoke of the intention of sending for help to Flanders, and acknowledged his treason, while he shrunk from the name of traitor. He complained that Cromwell had several times promised him his life if he would make a full confession, and once he said he had a token of pardon from the king; but his bearing was quiet and brave, and if he believed himself hardly dealt with, he said so only in private to a single person.

York was chosen as his place of execution. He was drawn through the streets upon a hurdle, to be hanged afterwards from the top of a tower. On his way he told the people that he had grievously offended God, the king, and the world. God he had offended in breaking his commandments many ways; the King's Majesty he had greatly offended in breaking his laws, to which every subject was bound; and the world he had offended, "for so much as he was the occasion that many a one had lost their lives, lands, and goods." At the scaffold he begged the people to pray for him, "and divers times asking the King's Highness' forgiveness, the lord chancellor, the Lord of Norfolk, the lord privy seal, the Lord of Sussex, and all the world, after certain orisons he commended his soul to God."¹

So we take leave of Robert Aske, closing his brief greatness

Darcy had blown out, which he thought not best to shew so long as the said lord was on life, partly because they should rather do hurt than good, and partly because he had no proof of them.

"But what these words were he would not declare, but in generality. Howbeit, his open confession was right good."—*MS. State Paper Office*, first series, vol. i.

¹ A general amnesty was proclaimed immediately after.

"The notable unkindness of the people," Norfolk said, "had been able to have moved his Grace to have taken such punishment on the offenders as might have been terrible for all men to have thought on that should hereafter have only heard the names of sedition and rebellion.

"Yet the king's most royal Majesty, of his most tender pity and great desire that he hath rather to preserve you from the stroke of justice imminent upon your deserts, than to put you to the extremity of the same, trusting and supposing that the punishment of a few offenders in respect of the multitude, which have suffered only for an example to others to avoid the like attemptations, will be sufficient for ever to make all you and your posterities to eschew semblable offences, of his inestimable goodness and pity is content by this general proclamation to give and grant to you all, every of you, his general and free pardon."—*Rolls House MS. A 2*, 28; *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 558.

with a felon's death—an unhappy ending! Yet, as we look back now, at a distance of three centuries, when the noble and the base, the conquerors and the conquered, have been all long dead together, when nothing remains of any of them but the work, worthy or unworthy, which they achieved, and the few years which weak false hearts could purchase by denying their faith and truckling to the time,¹ appear in the retrospect in their proper insignificance, a man who risked and lost his life for a cause which he believed a just one, though he was mistaken in so believing it, is not among those whose fate deserves the most compassion, or whose career is least to be envied.

The insurrection had sunk down into rest; but it had not been wholly in vain. So far as it was just it had prevailed; and happy were they whose work was sifted for them, who were permitted to accomplish so much only of their intentions as had been wisely formed. If the reins of England had been seized by Aske and Darcy, their signal beacons of insurrection would have become blazing martyr-piles, shining dreadfully through all after ages; and their names would have come down to posterity swathed in such epithets as cling, and will cling, for ever to the Gardiners and the Alvas.

While the noble Catholics were braving danger in England, Reginald Pole sate at safe distance on his Liège watch-tower, scenting the air for the expected battle-field; and at length, hungry and disappointed, turning sullenly away and preparing for flight. He had clung to hope till the last moment with desperate tenacity. He had laboured to inspire his friends in Italy with his own confidence. "The leaders of the faithful," he wrote to the Pope, "had been duped and murdered; but the hate of the people for the government had deepened in intensity. They were subdued for the instant by terror; but their strength was unimpaired. They were furious at the king's treachery."² "Twice," he wrote to Contarini, "the children of Israel went up against Benjamin, and twice they were put to confusion, God having encouraged them to fight, and God permitting their defeat. The third time they prevailed. In like manner had the children of the Church been twice conquered, once God so willing it in Ireland, and now again in England. A third time

¹ Like Cuthbert Tunstall, for instance, who, when upbraided for denying his belief in the Pope, said "he had never seen the time when he thought to lose one drop of blood therefore, for sure he was that none of those that heretofore had advantage by that authority would have lost one penny to save his life."—Tunstall to Pole: BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 481

² *Epist. Reg. Pol.* vol. ii. p. 46.

they would take up their cause, and then they would triumph gloriously.”¹ He knew what he meant. Already he was digging fresh graves for other victims; secret messengers were passing between Liège and his mother, and his mother’s family, and Lord Montague and Lord Exeter were already contemplating that third effort of which he spoke.² “I do but desire to wait in this place,” he said, “so long as the farmer waits for his crops. I have sown my seed. It will grow in its allotted time.”³ Contarini advised his return to Italy; and the Pope believed also that the opportunity was passed. Pole himself, alternately buoyed up with hope and plunged in despondency, seemed at times almost delirious. He spread a wild rumour that the king had sent emissaries to murder him.⁴ The Pope believed him, and became more anxious for the safety of so valuable a life. Letters passed and repassed. He could not resign himself to relinquish his enterprise. On the 21st of August he wrote that “the English government had made itself so detested, and the King of Scotland was so willing to assist, that with the most trifling impulse a revolution would be certain.” Events, however, so far, had not borne out his expectations. He had promised liberally, but there had been no fulfilment; and supposing at length that the chances of success were too slight to justify the risk of his longer stay, Paul put an end to his anxieties by sending him a formal recall.

The disappointment was hard to bear. One only comfort remained to him. Henry had been evidently anxious that his book should not be made known to the world. He might revise, intensify, and then publish it, and taste the pleasure of a safe revenge.

But I have now to mention a minor drama of treachery winding into the interstices of the larger. When Pole first awoke serious suspicion by being raised to the Cardinalate, Michael, younger brother of Sir George Throgmorton, volunteered to Cromwell to go to Rome, make his way into Pole’s service, and become a spy upon his actions. His offer was accepted. He went, and became Pole’s secretary; but, instead of betraying his

¹ *Epist. Reg. Pol.* vol. ii. p. 64.

² Trials of Lord Montague and the Marquis of Exeter: *Baga de Secretis*.

³ *Epist. Reg. Pol.* vol. ii. p. 73.

⁴ Pole to Contarini, *Epist.* vol. ii. p. 64. I call the rumour wild because there is no kind of evidence for it, and because the English resident at Antwerp, John Hutton, who was one of the persons accused by Pole, was himself the person to inform the king of the story.—*State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 703.

master, he betrayed his employers; and to him the "Liber de Unitate Ecclesie" was in all probability indebted for the fresh instalment of scandals which were poured into it before publication, and which have furnished material for the Catholic biographers of Henry the Eighth. Throgmorton's ingenious duplicity enabled him to blind the English government through the spring and summer. He supplied them with reports in a high degree laudatory of the cardinal, affirming entire confidence in the innocency of the legatine mission; and if they were not misled as to Pole's purposes, they believed in the fidelity of the spy. It was not till the day before leaving Liège that he threw off disguise, and wrote to Cromwell in language which was at last transparent.

The excellent intentions of the legate, he said, having been frustrated by events, and his pure and upright objects having been wickedly misconstrued, he was about to return to Rome. The Pope, whose gracious disposition towards England remained unabated, had issued indulgences through all Christendom for a general supplication that the King's Grace and the country might return to the Church. These would be naturally followed by a rehearsal of the king's actions, and accompanied by censures. It was likely, in addition, that, on Pole's return to Rome, his Holiness would request his consent that his book should be set in print, "as it will be hard for him to deny, for the great confidence they have therein." "Hereof," Throgmorton concluded, "I have thought it necessary to advertise you, considering the short departure of the legate, upon whose return, as you see, hangs both the divulging of the censures, the putting forth of his book, and the sending also of new ambassadors to all Christian princes. I suppose you have a great desire for a true knowledge of his mind and acts in this legacy. It makes many men marvel to see the King's Grace so bent to his ruin, rather than to take some way to reconcile him. Your lordship may best think what is best to be done."¹

Cromwell's answer to this communication, though long, will not be thought too long by those who desire to comprehend the passions of the time, and with the time the mind of its ruling spirit.

"I thought," was the abrupt commencement,² "that the singular goodness of the King's Highness shewed unto you, and the great and singular clemency shewed unto that detestable

¹ Michael Throgmorton to Cromwell: MS. *pene me.*

² Cromwell to Throgmorton: *Rolls House MS.*

traitor your master, in promising him not only forgiveness, but also forgetting of his most shameful ingratitude, unnaturalness, conspiracy against his honour, of whom he hath received no more, but even as much, and all that he hath—I thought, I say, that either this princely goodness might have brought that desperate rebel from his so sturdy malice, blindness, and perversity, or else have encouraged you to be his Highness's true and faithful subject. But I now remember myself too late. I might better have judged that so dishonest a master could have but even such servants as you are. No, no! loyalty and treason seldom dwell together. There can no faithful servant so long abide the sight of so heinous a traitor to his prince. You could not all this season have been a spy for the king, but at some time your countenance should have declared your heart to be loyal. No! You and your master have both well declared how little fear of God resteth in you, which, led by vain promise of promotion, thus against his laws work treason towards your natural prince and country, to serve an enemy of God, an enemy of all honesty, an enemy of right religion, a defender of iniquity, a merchant and occupier of all deceits.

“You have bleared mine eyes once. Your credit shall never more serve you so far to deceive me the second time. Your part was to do as the king your sovereign lord had commanded you. Your praise was to be sought in obeying his Highness's pleasure, and not in serving your foolish fantasy. But now, to stick unto a rebel, to follow a traitor, to serve a friend of his which mortally hateth your sovereign lord, what folly is it to excuse such mad lewdness? Your good master, who has lately entered into the religion which has been the ruin of all religion, cannot, ye say, but be the king's high friend. He will, as ye write, declare unto the world why the king taketh him for a traitor. In this thing he needeth to travel never a deal. All princes almost know how well he hath deserved this name; yea the King's Highness is much beholden unto some of them from whom his Grace hath learned the godly enterprises that this silly cardinal went about. Now, if those that have made him thus mad can also persuade him to print his detestable book, where one lie leapeth in every line on another's neck, he shall be then as much bound to them for their good counsel as his family to him for his wise dealing. He will, I trow, have as little joy thereof as his friends and kinsfolk are like to take profit of it. Pity it is that the folly of one brainsick Pole, or, to say better, of one witless fool, should be the ruin of so great a family. Let

him follow ambition as fast as he can, these that little have offended (saying that he is of their kin), were it not for the great mercy and benignity of the prince, should and might feel what it is to have such a traitor to their kinsman. Let his goodly book, the fruit of his whole study, come abroad, is there any man but he may well accuse our prince of too much clemency, and must marvel that no way is found to take away the author of such traitory? Surely when answers shall be made to his malice, there shall be very few but they will think as I do, that he hath as he deserveth, if he be brought to a most shameful death. Let him not think but though he can lie largely, there be some with us that can say truth of him. His praise shall be grief when men shall see the King's Highness's benefits towards him, and shall look upon his good heart, his grateful mind, his desire to serve the king's honour.

"Let his lewd work go forth. After that let princes judge whether the king can take the author of so famous a libel to be his true subject. Let the king's high benefits, and, which is far more to be esteemed, his singular benevolence shewed unto him of a child, come and make their plea. Can he or you think any ground safe for him to stand in? Hath he not just cause to fear lest every honest man should offer himself to revenge this so enormous unkindness? Shall he not think every honest man to be his foe? Shall not his detestable acts, written in his conscience, evermore bring him to continual sorrow? And ye know that, whensoever the king will, his Highness may bring it easily to pass that he shall think himself scarce sure of his life, although he went tied at his master's girdle. There may be found ways enough in Italy to rid a traitorous subject. Surely let him not think but, when justice can take no place by process of law at home, sometimes she may be enforced to take new means abroad.

"Amongst all your pretty news these are very pleasant, that the Bishop of Rome intendeth to make a lamentation to the world and to desire every man to pray that his old gains may return home again. Men will think that he has cause, or at least good time, to lament, not that the King of England hath pulled his realm out of thralldom, but that a great part of the world is like to do the same. Many a man weepeth for less. We blame him not if he lament. Howbeit, doubt ye not he shall find some with us that shall bid him be a better man, though they bid him not be of better cheer. If your good master take upon him to make this lamentation, as indeed I think there is no man that

hath better cause to wail than he hath, assure ye him he shall lack no consolation. The Pope will desire the world to pray for the king! The hypocrisy cometh even as it should do, and standeth in place meet for it. The world knoweth right well what other wiles he has practised these three years. They shall laugh to see his Holiness come to prayer because he cannot bring to pass that he most desireth. He that the last day went about to set all princes on his Grace's top, writing letters for the bringing of this to pass, shall he not now be thought holy that thus suddenly casteth away his weapon and falleth to his beads? If sinners be heard at any time, it is when they pray for good things. He shall not pray so fast that we may return to errors, to the defence of tyranny, ungodliness, untruth, as we shall pray that his Grace long may continue our most virtuous prince, and that hypocrites never after these days shall reign over us.

"Michael, if you were either natural towards your country or your family, you would not thus shame all your kin. I pray they bide but the shame of it. This I am sure of, though they bye and bye suffer no loss of goods, yet the least suspicion shall be enough to undo the greatest of them. I can no more, but desire that your master and you may acknowledge your detestable faults and be good witnesses of the king's high mercy. Ye may turn. If ye do so I doubt not but the king will shew the world that he desireth nothing more than the saving of his subjects. If ye continue in your malice and perverse blindness, doubt not but your end shall be as of all traitors. I have done what I may to save you. I must, I think, do what I can to see you condignly punished. God send you both to fare as ye deserve—either shortly to come to your allegiance, or else to a shameful death."

The scene and the subject change. I must now take my reader below the surface of outward events to the under-current of the war of opinions, where the forces were generated which gave to the time its life and meaning. Without some insight into this region history is but a dumb show of phantoms; yet, when we gaze into it with our best efforts, we catch but uncertain images and fleeting pictures. In palace and cottage, in village church and metropolitan cathedral, at the board of the Privy Council or in the road-side alehouse, the same questions were discussed, the same passions were agitated. A mysterious change was in process in the minds of men. They knew not what it was—they could not control its speed or guide its direction. The articles and the settlement of 1536 were already

buried under the froth of the insurrection. New standing-ground was to be sought for, only in its turn to slip away as it seemed to be gained; and the teachers and the taught, the governors and the governed, each separate human being, left to his own direction, was whirled along the rapids which formed the passage into a new era. A few scenes out of this strange time have been preserved for us in the records. They may pass one by one before us like the pictures in a magic slide.

The first figure that appears is a "friar mendicant, living by the alms of the king's subjects, forming himself to the fashions of the people." He is "going about from house to house, and when he comes to aged and simple people he will say to them, 'Father or sister, what a world this is! It was not so in your father's days. It is a perilous world. They will have no pilgrimages. They will not we should pray to saints, or fast, or do any good deeds. Oh Lord, have mercy on us! I will live as my forefathers have done. And I am sure your fathers and friends were good, and ye have followed them hitherto. Continue as ye have done and believe as they believed.'"¹

The friar disappears. A neighbour of the new opinions, who has seen him come and go, takes his place, and then begins an argument. One says "my father's faith shall be my faith." And the other, hot and foolish, answers, "Thy father was a liar and is in hell, and so is my father in hell also. My father never knew Scripture, and now it is come forth."²

The slide again moves. We are in a village church, and there is a window gorgeously painted, representing the various events in the life and death of Thomas à Becket. The king sits on his throne, and speaks fiercely to his four knights. The knights mount their horses and gallop to Canterbury. The archbishop is at vespers in the quire. The knights stride in and smite him dead. Then follows the retribution. In the great central compartment of the window the haughty prince is kneeling naked before the shrine of the martyr, and the monks stand round him and beat him with their rods. All over England in such images of luminous beauty³ the memory of the great

¹ Robert Ward to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xlv.

² Depositions relating to the Protestants in Yorkshire: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xviii.

³ The monkish poetry was pressed into the service. The following is from a MS. in Balliol College, Oxford. It is of the date, perhaps, of Henry VII.

"Listen, lordlings, both great and small,
I will tell you a wonder tale,

victory of the clergy had been perpetuated.¹ And now the particular church is Woodstock, the court is at the park, and day after day, notwithstanding the dangerous neighbourhood, in the church aisles groups of people assemble to gaze upon the window, and priests and pardoners expatiate with an obvious application on the glories of the martyr, the Church's victory, and the humiliation of the king. Eager ears listen; eager tongues draw comparisons. A groom from the court is lounging among the crowd, and interrupts the speakers somewhat disdainfully; he says that he sees no more reason why Becket was a saint than Robin Hood. No word is mentioned of the profanity to Henry; but a priest carries the story to Gardiner and Sir William Paulet. The groom is told that he might as well reason of the king's title as of St. Thomas's; forthwith he is hurried off under charge of heresy to the Tower; and, appealing to Cromwell, there follows a storm at the council table.²

We are next at Worcester, at the Lady Chapel, on the eve of the Assumption. There is a famous image of the Virgin there, and to check the superstition of the people the gorgeous

How Holy Church was brought in bale,
Cum magnâ injuriâ.

The greatest clerke in this land,
Thomas of Canterbury I understand,
Slain he was with wicked hand,
Malorum potentiâ.

The knights were sent from Henry the king:
That day they did a wicked thing;
Wicked men without lesing,
Per regis imperia.

They sought the bishop all about,
Within his palace and without:
Of Jesu Christ they had no doubt,
Pro suâ maliciâ.

They opened their mouths woundily wide,
They spake to him with much pride:
'Traitor! here shalt thou abide,
Ferens mortis tædia.'

Before the altar he kneelèd down,
And there they pared his crown,
And stirred his braines up and down,
Optans cœli gaudia."

¹ Ward to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xlvi.; Miles Coverdale to Cromwell: *Ibid.* vol. vii.

² William Umpton to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xlv.

dress has been taken off by Cromwell's order. A citizen of Worcester approaches the figure: "Ah, Lady," he cries, "art thou stripped now? I have seen the day that as clean men had been stripped at a pair of gallows as were they that stripped them." Then he kisses the image, and turns to the people and says, "Ye that be disposed to offer, the figure is no worse than it was before," "having a remorse unto her."¹

The common treads close upon the serious. On a summer evening a group of villagers are sitting at the door of an alehouse on Windermere; a certain master Alexander, a wandering ballad-singer, is "making merry with them." A neighbour Isaac Dickson saunters up and joins the party.

"Then the said Isaac commanded the said minstrel to sing a song he had sung at one Fairbank's house in Crossthwaite, in the county of Westmoreland, in the time of the rebellion, which song was called 'Crummock,'² which was not convenient, which the said minstrel utterly denied. The said Isaac commanded the said minstrel again in a violent manner to sing the song called 'Cromwell,' and the said minstrel said he would sing none such; and then the said Isaac pulled the minstrel by the arm, and smote him about the head with the pommel of a dagger, and the same song the minstrel would not sing to die for. The third time the said Isaac commanded the minstrel to sing the same song, and the minstrel said it would turn them both to anger, and would not. And then did Isaac call for a cup of ale, and bade the minstrel sing again, which he always denied; then Isaac took the minstrel by the beard and dashed the cup of ale in his face; also, he drew his dagger and hurt Master Willan, being the host of the said house, sore and grievously in the thigh, in rescuing of the said minstrel."³

Again, we find accounts of the reception which the English Bible met with in country parishes.

A circle of Protestants at Wincanton, in Somersetshire, wrote to Cromwell complaining of the curate, who would not teach them or preach to them, but "gave his time and attention to dicing, carding, bowling, and the cross waster." In their desire for spiritual food they applied to the rector of the next parish, who had come occasionally and given them a sermon, and had taught them to read the New Testament; when suddenly, on

¹ *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xlvi.

² Crummock Water is a lake in Cumberland. The point of the song must have some play on the name of Cromwell, pronounced as of old, "Crummell."

³ *Rolls House MS.* first series, 688.

Good Friday, "the unthrifty curate entered the pulpit, where he had set no foot for years," and "admonished his parishioners to give no credence to the new-fangled fellows which read the new books." "They be like knaves and Pharisees," he said; 'they be like a dog that gnaweth a marry-bone, and never cometh to the pith, therefore avoid their company; and if any man will preach the New Testament, if I may hear him, I am ready to fight with him incontinent;' and "indeed," the petitioners said, "he applyeth in such wise his school of fence so sore continually, that he feareth all his parishioners."¹

So the parish clerk at Hastings made a speech to the congregation on the faults of the translation: "It taught heresy," he said; "it taught that a priest might have a wife by God's law. He trusted to see the day that the book called the Bible, and all its maintainers and upholders, should be brent."²

Here, again, is a complaint from the parishioners of Langham in Essex, against their village potentate, a person named Vigourous, who with the priest oppressed and ill-used them.

"Upon Ascension day last past did two maidens sit in their pew or school in the church, as all honest and virtuous persons use to do in matins time, saying their matins together upon an English primer. Vigourous this seeing was sore angry, in so much that therefore, and for nothing else, he did bid the maidens to avoid out of the church, (calling them) errant whores, with such other odious and spiteful words. And further, upon a time within this year, one of Vigourous's servants did quarrel and brawl with other children many, whom he called heretics; and as children be light and wanton, they called the said servant again Pharisee. Upon this complained Robert Smyth of our town to Vigourous, saying that it was against reason that the great fellow his servant should quarrel and fight with children. Whereupon Vigourous said to his servant, 'See that thou do cut off their ears, oh errant whoreson, if they so call thee hereafter; and if thou lack a knife, I shall give thee one to do it. And if thou wilt not thus do, thou shalt no longer serve me.'"³

On the other hand, the Protestants gave themselves no pains to make their heterodoxy decent, or to spare the feelings of their antagonists. To call "a spade a spade," and a rogue a rogue, were Protestant axioms. Their favourite weapons were mystery plays, which they acted up and down the country in barns, in taverns, in chambers, on occasion, before the vicar-

¹ *MS. State Paper Office, second series, vol. xlviii.*

² *Rolls House MS. A 2, 30.*

³ *Ibid.*

general himself;¹ and the language of these, as well as the language of their own daily life, seemed constructed as if to pour scorn on the old belief. Men engaged in a mortal strife usually speak plainly. Blunt words strike home, and the euphuism which, in more ingenious ages, discovers that men mean the same thing when they say opposite things was as yet unknown or unappreciated. We have heard something of the popular impieties, as they were called in the complaints of convocation. I add a few more expressions taken at random from the depositions.—One man said “he would as soon see an oyster-shell above the priest’s head at the sacring time as the wafer. If a knave priest could make God, then would he hire one such God-maker for a year, and give him twenty pounds to make fishes and fowls.”² Another said that “if he had the cross that Christ died on, it should be the first block he would rive to the fire for any virtue that was in it.” Another, “that a shipload of friars’ girdles, nor a dungcart full of friars’ cowls and boots, would not help to justification.”

On both sides the same obstinate English nature was stirred into energetic hate.

Or, once more to turn to the surviving abbeys, here, too, each house was “divided against itself, and could not stand.” The monks of Stratford complained to Sir Thomas Cholmondley that their abbot had excommunicated them for breach of oath in revealing convent secrets to the royal visitors. Their allegiance, the brave abbot had said, was to the superior of their order abroad, not to the secular sovereign in England. He cared nothing for

¹ Very few of these are now known to be in existence. Roy’s *Satire* is one of the best. It would be excellent if reduced to reasonable length. The fury which the mystery plays excited in the Catholic party is a sufficient proof of the effect which they produced. An interesting letter to Cromwell, from the author of some of them, is among the *State Papers*. I find no further mention of him:—

“The Lord make you the instrument of my help, Lord Cromwell, that I may have liberty to preach the truth. I dedicate and offer to your lordship a ‘Reverend receiving of the sacrament,’ as a lenten matter declared by children, representing Christ, the word of God, Paul, Austin, a child, a man called Ignorancy, as a secret thing that shall have an end—once rehearsed afore your eyes. The priests in Suffolk will not receive me into their churches to preach; but have disdained me ever since I made a play against the Pope’s councillors, Error, collyclogger of conscience, and Incredulity. I have made a play called *A Rude Commonalty*. I am making of another, called *The Woman on the Rock*, in the fire of faith refining, and a purging in the true purgatory, never to be seen but of your lordship’s eye. Aid me, for Christ’s sake, that I may preach Christ.”—Thomas Wylley, fatherless and forsaken: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. 1.

² *Rolls House MS. A 2, 30.*

acts of parliament or king's commissions. The king could but kill him, and death was a small matter compared to perjury.¹ Death, therefore, he resolutely risked, and in some manner, we know not how, he escaped. Another abbot with the same courage was less fortunate. In the spring and summer of 1537 Woburn Abbey was in high confusion. The brethren were trimming to the times, anxious merely for secular habits, wives, and freedom. In the midst of them, Robert Hobbes the abbot, who in the past year had accepted the oath of supremacy in a moment of weakness, was lying worn down with sorrow, unable to govern his convent, or to endure the burden of his conscience. On Passion Sunday in that spring, dying as it seemed of a broken heart, he called the fraternity to his side, and exhorted them to charity, and prayed them to be obedient to their vows. Hard eyes and mocking lips were all the answer of the monks of Woburn. "Then, being in a great agony, the abbot rose up in his bed, and cried out, and said, 'I would to God it would please Him to take me out of this wretched world, and I would I had died with the good men that have suffered death for holding with the Pope. My conscience—my conscience doth grudge me for it.'" Abbot Hobbes should have his wish. Strength was left him to take up his cross once more where he had cast it down. Spiteful tongues carried his words to the council, and the law, remorseless as destiny, flung its meshes over him on the instant. He was swept up to London and interrogated in the usual form—"Was he the king's subject or the Pope's?" He stood to his faith like a man, and the scaffold swallowed him.²

So went the world in England, rushing forward, rocking and reeling in its course. What hand could guide it! Alone, perhaps, of living men, the king still believed that unity was possible—that these headstrong spirits were as horses broken loose, which could be caught again and harnessed for the road. For a thousand years there had been one faith in Western Christendom. From the Isles of Arran to the Danube thirty generations had followed each other to the grave who had held all to the same convictions, who had prayed all in the same words. What was this that had gone out among men that they were so changed? Why, when he had but sought to cleanse the dirt from off the temple, and restore its original beauty, should the temple itself crumble into ruins?

¹ *MS. State Paper Office.*

² *Rolls House MS. first series; MS. Cotton, Cleopatra, E 4.*

The sacraments, the Divine mysteries, had existed in the Church for fifteen centuries. For all those ages they had been supposed to be the rivulets which watered the earth with the graces of the Spirit. After so long experience it should have been at least possible to tell what they were, or how many they were; but the question was suddenly asked, and none could answer it. The bishops were applied to. Interrogatories were sent round among them for opinions, and some said there were three sacraments, some seven, some a hundred. The Archbishop of York insisted on the apostolical succession; the Archbishop of Canterbury believed that priests and bishops might be nominated by the crown, and he that was so appointed needed no consecration, for his appointment was sufficient.¹ Transubstantiation remained almost the only doctrine beyond the articles of the three creeds on which a powerful majority was agreed.²

Something, however, must be done. Another statement must be made of the doctrine of the Church of England—if the Church of England were to pretend to possess a doctrine—more complete than the last. The slander must be put to silence which confounded independence with heresy; the clergy must be provided with some guide to their teaching which it should be penal to neglect. Under orders, therefore, from the crown, the bishops agreed at last upon a body of practical divinity, which was published under the title of "The Bishop's Book," or "the Institution of a Christian Man." It consisted of four commentaries, on the creed, the sacraments, the ten commandments, and the Lord's prayer, and in point of language was beyond question the most beautiful composition which had as yet appeared in English prose. The doctrine was moderate, yet

¹ Answers to Questions on the Sacraments by the Bishops: BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 114.

² In one of the ablest and most liberal papers which was drawn up at this time, a paper so liberal indeed as to argue from the etymology of the word presbyter that "lay seniors, or antient men, might to some intents be called priests," I find this passage upon the eucharist: "As concerning the grace of consecration of the body of our Lord in form of bread and wine, we beseech your Grace that it may be prohibited to all men to persuade any manner of person to think that these words of our Master Christ, when He "took bread and blest it and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, Take, and eat ye, this is my body that shall be betrayed for you," ought to be understood figuratively. For since He that spake those words is of power to perform them literally, though no man's reason may know how that may be, yet they must believe it. And surely they that believe that God was of power to make all the world of nought, may lightly believe he was of power to make of bread his very body."—*Theological MSS. Rolls House*.

more Catholic, and in the matter of the sacraments, less ambiguous than the articles of 1536. The mystic number seven was restored, and the nature of sacramental grace explained in the old manner. Yet there was a manifest attempt, rather, perhaps, in tendency than in positive statement, to unite the two ideas of symbolic and instrumental efficacy, to indicate that the grace conveyed through the mechanical form was the spiritual instruction indicated in the form of the ceremony. The union among the bishops which appeared in the title of the book was in appearance only, or rather it was assumed by the will of the king, and in obedience to his orders. When the doctrines had been determined by the bench he even thought it necessary to admonish the composers to observe their own lessons.

"Experience," he wrote to them, "has taught us that it is much better for no laws to be made, than when many be well made none to be kept; and even so it is much better nothing should be written concerning religion, than when many things be well written nothing of them be taught and observed. . . . Our commandment is, therefore, that you agree in your preaching, and that vain praise of crafty wits and worldly estimation be laid aside, and true religion sought for. You serve God in your calling, and not your own glory or vile profit. We will no correcting of things, no glosses that take away the text; being much desirous, notwithstanding, that if in any place you have not written so plainly as you might have done, in your sermons to the people you utter all that is in God's Word. We will have no more thwarting—no more contentions whereby the people are much more set against one another than any taketh profit by such undiscreeit doctrines. We had much sooner to pray you than command you, and if the first will serve we will leave out the second. Howbeit, we will in any case that all preachers agree; for if any shall dissent, let him that will defend the worser part assure himself that he shall run into our displeasure."¹

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the sound thereof, but we cannot tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Henry would have the bishops agree; as easily could he bind the winds, and bid them blow at his pleasure. Under conditions, and within limits which he did not imagine, some measure of the agreement which he desired would be at last accomplished when the time and season would permit. Meanwhile, though his task was an

¹ Henry VIII. to the Bishops: *Rolls House MS. A 15.*

impossible one, it was better to try and fail, than to sit by and let the dissensions rage. Nor was Henry a man to submit patiently to failure. He would try and try again; when milder methods were unsuccessful he would try with bills of six articles, and pains and penalties. He was wrestling against destiny; yet then, now, and ever, it was, and remains true, that in this great matter of religion, in which to be right is the first condition of being right in anything—not variety of opinion, but unity—not the equal licence of the wise and the foolish to choose their belief, but an ordered harmony, where wisdom prescribes a law to ignorance, is the rule which reasonable men should most desire for themselves and for mankind.

But if Henry erred, his errors might find excuse in the multitude of business which was crowded upon him. Insurrection and controversy, foreign leagues, and Papal censures did not exhaust the number of his difficulties. All evil things in nature seemed to have combined to thwart him.

In the first few years after he became king, he had paid particular attention to the navy. He had himself some skill as a naval engineer, and had conducted experiments in the construction of hulls and rigging, and in ship artillery. Other matters had subsequently called off his attention, and especially since the commencement of the Reformation every moment had brought with it its own urgent claims, and the dockyards had fallen into decay. The finances had been straitened by the Irish wars, and from motives of economy the ships which the government possessed had fallen many of them out of commission, and were rotting in harbour. A few small vessels were kept on the coast of Ireland; but in the year 1536 there was scarcely in all the Channel a single royal cruiser carrying the English flag. Materials to man a fleet existed amply in the fishermen who went year after year in vast numbers to Iceland and to Ireland¹—hardy sailors, who, taught by necessity, went always armed, and had learnt to fight as well as to work; but, from a neglect not the less injurious, because intelligible, the English authority in their own waters had sunk to a shadow.

¹ The Iceland fleet is constantly mentioned in the *Records*. Before the discovery of Newfoundland, Iceland was the great resort of English fishermen. Those who would not venture so long a voyage, fished the coasts of Cork and Kerry. When Skeffington was besieging Dungarvon, in 1535, Devonshire fishing smacks, which were accidentally in the neighbourhood, blockaded the harbour for him. The south of Ireland at the same time was the regular resort of Spaniards with the same object. Sir Anthony St. Leger said that as many as two or three hundred sail might sometimes be seen at once in Valentia harbour.—*State Papers*, vol. v. p. 443, etc.

Pirates swarmed along the coasts—entering fearlessly into the harbours, and lying there in careless security. The war breaking out between Charles and Francis, the French and Flemish ships of war captured prizes or fought battles in the mouths of English rivers, or under the windows of English towns; and through preying upon each other as enemies in the ordinary sense, both occasionally made prey of heretic English as enemies of the Church. While the courts of Brussels and Paris were making professions of goodwill, the cruisers of both governments openly seized English traders and plundered English fishing vessels, and Henry had for many months been compelled by the insurrection to submit to these aggressions, and to trust his subjects along the coasts to such inadequate defences as they could themselves provide. A French galliass and galleon came into Dartmouth harbour and attempted to cut out two merchantmen which were lying there; the mayor attacked them in boats and beat them off:¹ but the harbours in general were poorly defended, and strange scenes occasionally took place in their waters. John Arundel, of Trerice, reports the following story to Cromwell: “There came into Falmouth haven a fleet of Spaniards, and the day after came four ships of Dieppe, men-of-war, and the Spaniards shot into the Frenchmen, and the Frenchmen shot into the Spaniards, and during three hours great guns shot between them, and the Frenchmen were glad to come higher up the haven; and the morrow after St. Paul’s day the Spaniards came up to assault the Frenchmen, and the Frenchmen came up almost to the town of Truro, and went aground there. I went to the admiral of the Spaniards and commanded him to keep the king’s peace, and not to follow further; but the Spaniard would not, but said ‘I will have them, or I will die for it.’ And then the Spaniards put their ordnance in their boats, and shot the French admiral forty or sixty shots during a long hour, the gentlemen of the city, Mr. Killigrew and Mr. Trefusis, and others, taking pleasure at it. Then I went to the Spaniards and told them to leave their shooting, or I would raise the country upon them. And so the Spaniards left. My Lord, I and all the country will desire the King’s Grace that we may have blockhouses made upon our haven.”²

¹ *MS. State Paper Office, second series, vol. xxiv.*

² *MS. State Paper Office, second series, vol. i.* On the other hand the French cut out a Flemish ship from Portsmouth, and another from Southampton.

Pirates were enemies to which the people were accustomed, and they could in some measure cope with them; but commissioned vessels of war had now condescended to pirates' practices. Sandwich boatmen were pillaged by a Flemish cruiser in the Downs in the autumn of 1536.¹ A smack belonging to Deal was twice boarded and robbed by a Flemish officer of high rank, the admiral of the Sluys.²

The king had for several years been engaged in making a harbour of refuge at Dover. The workmen saw English traders off the coast, and even the very vessels which brought the iron and timber for the harbour-piers, plundered by French and Flemings under their eyes;³ and the London merchants declared that, although the country was nominally at peace, their ships could not venture out of port unless the government would undertake their convoy.⁴ The remonstrances which were made, of course in loud terms, at Paris and Brussels, were received with verbal apologies, and the queen regent gave orders that her cruisers should cease their outrages; but either their commanders believed that their conduct would be secretly winked at, or they could not be convinced that heretics were not lawful game; or perhaps the zealous subjects of the Catholic powers desired to precipitate the sluggish action of their governments. At any rate, the same insolences continued, and no redress could be obtained.

Henry could not afford to declare war. The exchequer was ill-furnished. The rebellion had consumed the subsidy, and the abbey lands had as yet returned little profit either by their

¹ *Rolls House MS. A 2, 30.*

² The inventory of his losses which was sent in by the captain is noticeable, as shewing the equipment of a Channel fishing vessel. One last of herring, worth £4, 13s. Three hagbushes, 15s. In money, £1, 16s. 8d. Two long bows, 4s. Two bills and a sheaf of arrows, 3s. 8d. A pair of new boots of leather, 3s. 4d. Two barrels of double beer, 3s. 4d. Four mantles of frieze, 12s. A bonnet, 1s. 2d. In bread, candles, and other necessities, 2s. The second time, one hogshead of double beer, 6s.—*MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xxviii.

³ Sir Thomas Cheyne writes to Cromwell: "I have received letters from Dover that the Frenchmen on the sea hath taken worth £2000 of goods since the king being there, and a man-of-war of Dieppe and a pinnace took the king's barge that carries the timber for his Highness's work there, and robbed and spoiled the ship and men of money, victuals, clothes, ropes, and left them not so much as their compass. And another Frenchman took away a pink in Dover roads and carried her away. And on Tuesday last a great fleet of Flemings men-of-war met with my Lord Lisle's ship, laden with wool to Flanders, and one of them took all the victuals and ordnance. Thus the king's subjects be robbed and spoiled every day."—*MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. vi.

⁴ Sir William Fitzwilliam to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*.

rentals or by sale. The country, however, had not yet sunk so low as to be unable to defend its own coasts and its own traders. Sufficient money was found for the immediate purpose, and a small but admirably equipped fleet was fitted out silently at Portsmouth. Sir Thomas Seymour, the queen's brother, Sir George Carew, Sir John Dudley, and Christopher Coe, a rough English sailor, were appointed to the command; and, when the ships were ready, they swept out into the Channel. Secrecy had been observed as far as possible, in the hope of taking the offenders by surprise. The greater number of them had, unhappily, been warned, and had escaped to their own harbours; but Coe shortly brought two pirate prizes into Rye. The people of Penzance, one August afternoon, heard the thunder of distant cannon. Carew and Seymour, searching the western coast, had come on the traces of four French ships of war, which had been plundering. They came up with them in Mounts Bay, and, closing against heavy odds, they fought them there till night. At daybreak, one of the four lay on the water, a sinking wreck. The others had crawled away in the darkness, and came no more into English waters.¹ Dudley had been even more fortunate. "As he was lying between the Needles and the Cowe," there came a letter to him from the Mayor of Rye, "that the Flemings had boarded a merchant-ship belonging to that port, and had taken goods out of her valued at three hundred pounds." "That hearing," he said, in his despatch to Henry, "I, with another of your Grace's ships, made all the diligence that was possible towards the said coast of Rye; and, as it chanced, the wind served us so well that we were next morning before day against the Combe, and there we heard news that the said Flemings were departed the day before. Then we prepared towards the Downs, for the wind served for that place, and there we found lying the admiral of the Sluys, with one ship in his company besides himself, being both as well trimmed for the war as I have lightly seen. And when I had perfect knowledge that it was the admiral of the Sluys, of whom I had heard, both at Rye and at Portsmouth, divers robberies and ill-demeanours by him committed against your Highness's subjects, then I commanded my master to bring my ship to an anchor, as nigh to the said admiral as he could, to the intent to have had some communication with him; who incontinent put himself and all his men to defence, and neither would come to

¹ Sir William Godolphin to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xiii.

communication nor would send none of his men aboard of me. And when I saw what a great brag they set upon it—for they made their drumsalt to strike alarum, and every man settled them to fight—I caused my master gunner to loose a piece of ordnance, and not touched him by a good space; but he sent one to my ship, and mocked not with me, for he brake down a part of the decks of my ship, and hurt one of my gunners very sore. That done, I trifled no more with him, but caused my master to lay her aboard; and so, within a little fight, she was yielded." Dudley's second ship had been engaged with the other Fleming; but the latter, as soon as the admiral was taken, slipped her cable and attempted to escape. The Englishman stood after her. Both ships vanished up Channel, scudding before a gale of wind; but whether the Dutchman was brought back a prize, or whether the pursuer followed too far, and found himself, as Dudley feared, caught on a lee shore off the Holland flats, the Records are silent.¹ Pirates, however, and over-zealous privateers, in these and other encounters, were taught their lesson; and it did not, for some time, require to be repeated: "Your subjects," Dudley and Seymour told the king in a joint letter, "shall not only pass and repass without danger of taking, but your Majesty shall be known to be lord of these seas."² They kept their word. In this one summer the Channel was cleared, and the nucleus was formed of the fleet which, eight years after, held in check and baffled the most powerful armament which had left the French shores against England since the Norman William crossed to Hastings.

But Henry did not rest upon his success. The impulse had been given, and the work of national defence went forward. The animus of foreign powers was evidently as bad as possible. Subjects shared the feelings of their rulers. The Pope might succeed, and most likely would succeed at last, in reconciling France and Spain; and experience proved that England lay formidably open to attack. It was no longer safe to trust wholly to the extemporised militia. The introduction of artillery was converting war into a science; and the recent proofs of the unprotected condition of the harbours should not be allowed to pass without leaving their lesson. Commissions were issued for a survey of the whole eastern and southern coasts. The most efficient gentlemen residing in the counties which touched the sea were requested to send up reports of the

¹ *MS. State Paper Office, Letters to the King and Council, vol. i.*

² *MS. ibid.*

points where invading armies could be most easily landed, with such plans as occurred to them for the best means of throwing up defences.¹ The plans were submitted to engineers in London; and in two years every exposed spot upon the coast was guarded by an earthwork, or a fort or blockhouse. Batteries were erected to protect the harbours at St. Michael's Mount, Falmouth, Fowey, Plymouth, Dartmouth, Torbay, Portland, Calshot, Cowes, and Portsmouth.² Castles (some of them remain to the present day) were built at Dover, Deal, Sandwich, and along both shores of the Thames. The walls and embankments at Guisnes and Calais were repaired and enlarged; and Hull, Scarborough, Newcastle, and Berwick-upon-Tweed were made impregnable against ordinary attack. Each of these places was defended by adequate and trained garrisons;³ and the musters were kept in training within twenty miles of the coast, and were held in readiness to assemble on any point at any moment.

Money was the chief difficulty. The change in the character of war created unforeseen expenses of many kinds. The cost of regular military and naval establishments, a new feature in the national system, was thrown suddenly on the crown; and the revenue was unequal to so large a demand upon it. A fresh political arrangement was displacing the old; and the finances were necessarily long disordered before the country understood its condition, and had devised methods to meet its necessities.

At this conjuncture the abbey lands were a fortunate resource. They were disposed of rapidly—of course on easy terms to the purchasers. The insurrection as we saw had taught the necessity of filling the place of the monks with resident owners, who would maintain hospitality liberally, and on a scale to contrast favourably with the careless waste of their predecessors. Obligations to this effect were made a condition of the sales, and lowered naturally the market value of the properties. Considerable sums, however, were realised,

¹ Cromwell's Memoranda: *MS. Cotton. Titus, B 1*. Many of the plans are in the Cotton Library, executed, some of them, with great rudeness; some finished with the delicacy of monastic illuminations; some, but very few, are good working drawings. It is a mortifying proof of the backwardness of the English in engineering skill, that the king for his works at Dover sent for engineers to Spain.

² 32 Hen. VIII. cap. 50.

³ Details of the equipments of many of these fortresses lie scattered among the State Papers. The expenses were enormous, but were minutely recorded.

adequate for immediate objects, though falling short of the ultimate cost of the defences of the country. At the same time the government works found labour for the able-bodied beggars, those sturdy vagrants whose living had been gathered hitherto at the doors of the religious houses, varied only with intervals of the stocks and the cart's-tail.

Thus the spoils of the Church furnished the arms by which the Pope and the Pope's friends could be held at bay; and by degrees in the healthier portion of the nation an English enthusiasm took the place of a superstitious panic. Loyalty towards England went along with the Reformation, when the Reformation was menaced by foreign enemies; and the wide disaffection which in 1536 had threatened a revolution, became concentrated in a vindictive minority, to whom the Papacy was dearer than their country, and whose persevering conspiracies taught England at no distant time to acquiesce with its whole heart in the wisdom which chained them down by penal laws as traitors and enemies to the commonwealth.¹

Meanwhile, the event to which the king, the whole of England and the Continent, friends and enemies, were looking so anxiously, was approaching near. The king's health was growing visibly weaker; his corpulency was increasing, through disease and weakness of system; an inveterate ulcer had settled in his leg; and the chances of his death in consequence of it were already calculated.² The whole fortune of the future seemed to depend on the issue of the queen's pregnancy. Yet,

¹ On whatever side we turn in this reign, we find the old and the new in collision. While the harbours, piers, and the fortresses were rising at Dover, an ancient hermit tottered night after night from his cell to a chapel on the cliff, and the tapers on the altar, before which he knelt in his lowly orisons, made a familiar beacon far over the rolling waters. The men of the rising world cared little for the sentiment of the past. The anchorite was told sternly by the workmen that his light was a signal to the king's enemies, and must burn no more; and when it was next seen, three of them waylaid the old man on his road home, threw him down, and beat him cruelly.—*MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xxxiii.

² Lord Montague, on the 24th of March, 1537, said, "I dreamed that the king was dead. He is not dead, but he will die one day suddenly, his leg will kill him, and then we shall have jolly stirring."—*Trial of Lord Montague: Baga de Secretis*. The king himself, in explaining to the Duke of Norfolk his reason for postponing his journey to Yorkshire in the past summer, said: "To be frank with you, which we desire you in any wise to keep to yourself, being an humour fallen into our legs, and our physicians therefore advising us in no wise to take so far a journey in the heat of the year, whereby the same might put us to further trouble and displeasure, it hath been thought more expedient that we should, upon that respect only, though the grounds before specified had not concurred with it, now change our determination."—*State Papers*, vol. i. p. 555.

notwithstanding his infirmities, Henry was in high spirits. At the end of the summer he was with a hunting party at Guildford, and was described as being especially affable and good-humoured.¹ In September he was at Hampton Court, where the confinement was expected at the close of the month, or at the beginning of October. Strange inquiries had been made by Pole, or by Pole's secretary,² on the probable sex of the child. On the 12th of October the question was decided by the birth of a prince, so long and passionately hoped for. Only a most minute intimacy with the condition of the country can make intelligible the feelings with which the news were received. The crown had an undoubted heir. The succession was sure. The king, who was supposed to be under a curse which refused him male posterity, was relieved from the bane. Providence had borne witness for him, and had rewarded his policy. No revolution need be looked for on his death. The Catholics could not hope for their "jolly stirring." The anti-Papal leaders need not dread the stake for their wages. The insurrection was crushed. A prince was born. England was saved. These were the terms which many a heart repeated to itself. The Marchioness of Dorset wrote to Henry that she had received the most joyful news that came to England these many years; for the which she and all his Grace's subjects gave thanks to Almighty God, for that He had remembered his Grace and all his subjects with a prince, to the comfort, universal weal, and quietness of the realm.³ Latimer, in a letter to Cromwell, was still more emphatic. "There is no less rejoicing," he said, "for the birth of our prince, whom we hungered for so long, than there was, I trow, *inter vicinos*, at the birth of John the Baptist. God give us grace to yield due thanks to our Lord God, the God of England. For verily He hath shewed Himself the God of England; or rather an English God, if we will consider and ponder his proceedings with us. He hath overcome our illness with his exceeding goodness, so that we are now more compelled to serve Him and promote his Word, if

¹ "I assure your lordship his Grace is very sorry that ye might not be here to make good cheer as we do. He useth himself more like a good fellow among us that be here, than like a king, and, thanked be God, I never saw him merrier in his life than he is now."—Sir John Russell to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xxxvi.

² "Michael Throgmorton gave great charge to William Vaughan to enquire if there had been any communication upon the opinions of the physicians, whether the Queen's Grace were with child with a man child or not."—Hutton to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 703.

³ *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 570.

the Devil of all devils be not in us. We have now the stop of various trusts and the stay of vain expectations. Let us all pray for his preservation."¹

In Latimer's words, the joy and the especial causes of it are alike transparent; but a disaster followed so closely as to show that the mysterious fatality which pursued the king in his domestic relations had not ceased to overshadow him, and to furnish food for fresh superstition and fresh intrigue. The birth took place on the 12th of October. The queen continued to do well up to the 22nd or 23rd,² when it seems that, through the carelessness of her attendants, she was allowed to indulge in some improper food, for which she had expressed a wish. She caught a cold at the same time;³ and although on the evening of the 23rd she appeared still so well that the king intended to leave Hampton Court on the following day, she became in the night alarmingly worse, and was in evident danger. In the morning the symptoms had somewhat improved, and there were hopes that the attack would pass off; but the unfortunate appearances soon returned; in a few more hours she was dead.⁴

A worse calamity could scarcely have befallen the king (unless the loss of the child had been added to that of the mother) than the death of Jane Seymour. Although she makes no figure in history, though she took no part in state questions, and we know little either of her sympathies or opinions, her name is mentioned by both Protestant and Catholic with unreserved respect. She married the king under circumstances peculiarly agitating, without preparation, without attachment, either on her part or on his, but under the pressure of a sudden and tragical necessity. Her uprightness of character and sweetness of disposition had earned her husband's esteem, and with his esteem an affection deeper than he had perhaps anticipated. At her side, at his own death, he desired that his body might be laid.

When he knew that she was gone, he held a single interview with the council, and then retired to the palace at Westminster, where "he mourned and kept himself close a great while."⁵

¹ Latimer to Cromwell: *State Paper Office*, vol. i. p. 571.

² Hall is made to say she died on the 14th. The mistake was due probably to the printer. He is unlikely himself to have made so large an error.

³ *State Papers*, vol. viii. p. 1.

⁴ Sir John Russell to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xxxvi.; *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 573.

⁵ HALL, p. 825.

In the country the rejoicings were turned to sorrow.¹ Owing to the preternatural excitement of the public imagination, groundless rumours instantly gained currency. It was said that, when the queen was in labour, a lady had told the king that either the child must die or the mother; that the king had answered, Save the child, and therefore "the child was cut out of his mother's womb."² Catherine's male children had all died in infancy. This child, it was soon believed, was dead also. Some said that the child, some that the king, some that both were dead. The Cæsarian birth passed for an established fact; while a prophecy was discovered, which said that "He should be killed that never was born, and nature's hand or man's had brought it to pass, or soon would bring it to pass."³

These were the mere bubbles of credulity, blown by the general wind; but the interests which now depended upon the infant prince's life, caused to grave persons grave anxiety. He was but one—a single life—between the king's death and chaos, and the king was again a widower. The greater the importance of the child's preservation to one party, the greater the temptation to the other to destroy it; and the precautions with which the royal nursery was surrounded, betray most real alarm that an attempt might be ventured to make away with him.

¹ Leland wrote an ode on the occasion, which is not without some beauty:—

Spes erat ampla quidem numerosâ prole Joanna
Henricum ut faceret regem facunda parentem.
Sed Superis aliter visum est, cruciatus acerbis
Distorsit vacuum lethali tormine ventrem.
Frigora crediderim temere contracta fuisse
In causâ, superat vis morbi; jamque salute
Desperatâ omni, nymphis hæc rettulit almis.
Non mihi mors curæ est, perituram agnosco creavit
Omnipotens—Moriar—terram tibi debeo terra:
At pius Elysiis animus spatiabitur hortis.
Deprecor hoc unum. Maturos filius annos
Exigat, et tandem regno det jura paterno.
Dixit et æternâ clauderat lumina nube.
Nulla dies pressit graviori clade Britannum.

Genethliacon Edwardi Principis.

² *Rolls House MS. A 2, 30.* I trace the report to within a month of Jane Seymour's death. Sanders therefore must be held acquitted of the charge of having invented it. The circumstances of the death itself are so clear as to leave no trace of uncertainty. How many of the interesting personal anecdotes of remarkable people, which have gained and which retain the public confidence, are better founded than this? Prudence, instructed by experience, enters a general caution against all anecdotes particularly striking.

³ *Rolls House MS. A 2, 30.*

Instructions to the grand chamberlain were drawn, by some one in high authority, with more than the solemnity of an act of parliament.

"Like as there is nothing in this world so noble, just, and perfect, but that there is something contrary, that evermore envieth it, and procureth the destruction of the same, insomuch as God Himself hath the Devil repugnant to Him, Christ hath his Antichrist and persecutor, and from the highest to the lowest after such proportion, so the Prince's Grace, for all his nobility and innocency (albeit he never offended any one), yet by all likelihood he lacketh not envy nor adversaries against his Grace, who, either for ambition of their own promotion, or otherwise to fulfil their malicious perverse mind, would, perchance, if they saw opportunity, which God forbid, procure to his Grace displeasure. And although his Majesty doubteth not, but like as God for the comfort of this whole realm hath given the said prince, so of his providence He will preserve and defend him; yet, nevertheless, heed and caution ought to be taken, to avoid the evil enterprises which might be devised against his Grace, or danger of his person."

In pursuance of such caution, it was commanded that no person, of what rank soever, except the regular attendants in the nursery, should approach the cradle, without an order under the king's hand. The food supplied for the child's use was to be largely "assayed." His clothes were to be washed by his own servants, and no other hand might touch them. The material was to be submitted to all tests of poison. The chamberlain or vice-chamberlain must be present morning and evening, when the prince was washed and dressed; and nothing, of any kind, bought for the use of the nursery, might be introduced till it had been aired and perfumed. No person—not even the domestics of the palace—might have access to the prince's rooms, except those who were specially appointed to them; nor might any member of the household approach London during the unhealthy season, for fear of their catching and conveying infection. Finally, during the infancy, the officers in the establishment were obliged to dispense with the attendance of pages or boys of any kind, for fear of inconvenience from their thoughtlessness.¹

Regulations so suspicious and minute, betray more than the exaggeration of ordinary anxiety. Fears were evidently enter-

¹ Instructions for the Household of Edward Prince of Wales. *Rolls House MS.*

tained of something worse than natural infection; and we can hope only, for the credit of the Catholics, who expected to profit by the prince's death, that they were clear of the intentions which were certainly attributed to them.

Other steps were also taken, in which precaution was mixed with compliment. Should the king die within a few years, the natural protectors of the prince in his minority would be his mother's family. Sir Edward Seymour, her brother, was now created Earl of Hertford, to give him the necessary rank; and for additional security, peerages were bestowed upon three others of the council whose loyalty could be depended upon. Sir William Fitzwilliam, now lord high admiral, was created Earl of Southampton; Sir William Paulet became Lord St. John; and Sir John Russell as Lord Russell, commenced a line of nobles, whose services to England wind like a silver cord through later history.

But inasmuch as, if the danger to the prince was real, the chief cause of it lay in his being an only child, as the temptation to a crime would cease when, by other sons or daughters, of unquestioned legitimacy, the success of the attempt would produce no change, and as all other interests depending now on a single life would be additionally secured, so on the very day of the queen's death, as on the day which followed it, the Privy Council represented to the king the necessity of his undertaking a fresh marriage while the state of his health left a hope that he might be again a father. Henry, suffering deeply from his loss, desired at first to evade a duty in which he had little interest at any time, and which his present sorrow rendered merely distressing. He had consented, under an absolute necessity, on the discovery of the complicated treasons of Anne. The obligation was now less considerable, and he hoped to be spared.

The council, however, continued to urge what his own judgment united to recommend. He saw that it must be so; and he resigned himself. "Although his Highness is not disposed to marry again," wrote Cromwell, in the despatch which communicated to the ambassador in France the death of Queen Jane, "yet his tender zeal to his subjects hath already overcome his Grace's said disposition, and framed his mind both to be indifferent to the thing, and to the election of any person, from any part, that with deliberation shall be thought meet for him."¹

Persons who are acquainted with the true history of Henry's

¹ *State Papers*, vol. viii. p. 2.

later marriages, while not surprised at their unfortunate consequences, yet smile at the interpretation which popular tradition has assigned to his conduct. Popular tradition is a less safe guide through difficult passages in history than the word of statesmen who were actors upon the stage, and were concerned personally in the conduct of the events which they describe.

CHAPTER XV

THE EXETER CONSPIRACY

THOSE who believe that human actions obey the laws of natural causation, might find their philosophy confirmed by the conduct of the great powers of Europe during the early years of the Reformation. With a regularity uniform as that on which we calculate in the application of mechanical forces, the same combinations were attended with identical effects; and given the relations between France and Spain, between Spain and Germany, between England and either of the three, the political situation of all Western Christendom could be estimated with as much certainty as the figure and dimensions of a triangle from the length of one of its sides and the inclination of two of its angles. When England was making advances towards the Lutherans, we are sure that France and Spain were in conjunction under the Papacy, and were menacing the Reformation. When such advances had been pushed forward into prominence, and there was a likelihood of a Protestant league, the Emperor was compelled to neutralise the danger by concessions to the German Diet, or by an affectation of a desire for a reconciliation with Henry, to which Henry was always ready to listen. Then Henry would look coldly on the Protestants, and the Protestants on him. Then Charles could afford again to lay the curb on Francis. Then Francis would again storm and threaten, till passion broke into war. War brought its usual consequences of mutual injury, disaster, and exhaustion; and then the Pope would interfere, and peace would follow, and the same round would repeat itself. Statesmen and kings made, as they imagined, their fine strokes of policy. A wisdom other than theirs condemned them to tread again and again the same ineffectual circle.

But while fact and necessity were thus inexorable, imagination remained uncontrolled; and efforts were made of all kinds, and on all sides, to find openings of escape. The Emperor had boasted, in 1528, that he would rid himself of the English difficulty by a revolution which should dethrone Henry. The

experiment had been tried with no success hitherto, and with indifferent prospects for the future. Revolution failing, he believed that he might reconvert England to the Papacy; while both Henry and the Germans on their side had not ceased to hope that they might convert the Emperor to the Reformation. The perspective of Europe varied with the point of view of the various parties. The picture was arranged by prejudice, and coloured by inclination.

The overtures to England which Charles had commenced on the death of Catherine, had been checked by Henry's haughty answer; and Charles had replied by an indirect countenance, through his ambassador, to Pole,¹ and to Lord Darcy. But the motives which had led to these overtures remained to invite their renewal; the insurrection was for the present prostrate, and the Emperor therefore withdrew his first step, and disowned his compromised minister in London. In June, 1537, Diego de Mendoza arrived at the English court, with a commission to express in more emphatic terms the earnest wish of the court of Spain for the renewal of the old alliance.

The king had done enough for the protection of his dignity; prudence now recommended him to believe in Charles's sincerity. A solid understanding with Flanders was the best passport to the hearts of large portions of his subjects, whose interests were connected with the wool trade: he was himself ardently anxious to resume his place in the fraternity of European sovereigns. Mendoza was graciously received. Sir Thomas Wyatt was despatched into Spain with a corresponding mission; and Wyatt's instructions were couched in language which showed that, although the English government were under no delusion as to Charles's late proceedings, they were ready to close their eyes to objects which they did not wish to see. The proposals for a reconciliation which had been made by the late ambassadors had appeared so feeble, Wyatt was to say, as to seem rather a device of policy to prevent the King of England from allying himself with France, than as intended in sincerity; M. de Mendoza, however, had removed all such unpleasant impressions; and although, if the Emperor would consider the past differences between the two courts impartially, he must feel that the fault rested with himself, yet the English government, on their side, were ready to set aside all painful recollections.² There were persons, indeed, who affirmed that the

¹ Pole to the Bishop of Liège: *Epist.* vol. ii. p. 41.

² Norr's *Wyatt*, p. 312.

Emperor was still trifling, that Mendoza was playing a game, and that, in "heart, deed, and words," the Spanish court were "doing all they could to his Majesty's dishonour."¹ Nay, even individuals could be found who boasted themselves to have refused some honest offers because they were "knit with vile and filthy conditions towards his Majesty."² The king, however, set aside these rumours, as either without foundation, or as belonging to the past rather than the present. He required only, as a condition of renewed friendship, that if the Pope found the means of attacking England, Charles should bind himself to be no party to such an enterprise, but should oppose it "to the uttermost of his power."³ In return, the Emperor might perhaps require that the Lady Mary should "be restored to her rank as princess." Some difficulty no doubt continued, and must continue, on this point. But it was a difficulty rather in form than in substance. The king desired that his daughter might be trusted to his honour: she might expect much from his generosity, if he was not pressed to definite promises. Meanwhile, she herself had submitted without reserve; she had entreated pardon for her past disobedience, and accepted her position as illegitimate.⁴ It was likely that she would retain her place in the line of succession. Should the king die without legitimate children, she would, in all probability, be his heir.

In confirmation of this language, Mary added a letter to the commission, in which, with her own hand, she assured the Emperor that she was satisfied, entreating him to "repent," as she had herself repented; and "to take of her the tenour."⁵

Thus instructed, Wyatt proceeded to Spain; and his reception was, on the whole, auspicious. On both sides, indeed, the hope of agreement on points of religion disappeared with the first words upon the subject. Mendoza offered in London the Emperor's mediation with the Pope. He received for answer that he might spare his labour. "The disposition of the King's Highness was immutably against the said Bishop."⁶ The

¹ *Norr's Wyatt*, p. 319.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.* p. 322.

⁴ Mary's submission dates from the fall of Anne Boleyn. It was offered by her on the instant, in three successive letters; two of which are printed in the State Papers, a third is in MS. in the State Paper Office.

⁵ "And here Sir Thomas Wyatt shall deliver unto the Emperor the letter written unto him from the said Lady Mary, whereby it shall appear how she doth repent herself, and how she would that he should repent, and take of her the tenour. Whereof it shall like him to consider, it is not to be thought, but it will acquit him therein, his Grace, nevertheless, being so good a lord and father to her as he is, and undoubtedly will be."—Instructions to Sir Thomas Wyatt: *Norr's Wyatt*, p. 314.

⁶ Cromwell to Wyatt: *Norr*, p. 321.

Emperor in his opening interview spoke to Wyatt of the sickness of England, from which he trusted it would soon be recovered. Wyatt replied that England was conscious only of having cast off a chronic sickness which had lasted too long.

On the other hand, Charles, with equal resolution, declined a theological discussion, to which Henry had challenged him. "If your Majesty," wrote Wyatt, "would hearken to the reconciling with the Bishop of Rome, he would be glad to travel in it. But if not, yet he will go through with you, and will continue ever in that mind, the same notwithstanding. And like as he is not lettred, so will he not charge your Majesty with the argument of the Bishop's state, but leave it alone to them that it toucheth."¹

On these terms, apparently satisfactory, the *entente cordiale* was restored between England and Spain. It was threatened by a cloud in November, when a truce² was concluded between Charles and Francis; but the light suspicion was dispelled by assurances that if the truce was followed by a peace, "the King of England should be in the same as a principal contrahent;" "that nothing should be therein concluded which might redound to his dishonour or discontentment."³ The alliance promised stability: by skilful management it might be even more strongly cemented.

The English council were now busily engaged in selecting a successor for Jane Seymour. Mendoza, in the name of the Emperor, proposed the Infanta of Portugal. "The offer was thankfully taken,"⁴ but was for some cause unwelcome, and died in its first mention. Cromwell had thrown out feelers in the various European courts. Madame de Longueville was thought of,⁵ if she was not already destined for another throne.⁶ Hutton, the English agent in Flanders, recommended several ladies as more or less desirable—a daughter of the Lord of Brederode, the Countess of Egmont, Anne of Cleves (of the latter, however, adding, that she was said to be plain), and

¹ *State Papers*, vol. viii. p. 34.

² "My lord: this shall be to advertise you that the Imperials and Frenchmen have taken a truce for ten months, which, as we think, be great news, and of great weight and moment. Howbeit, my trust is, the King's Highness knows what is the occasion of this sudden turn, or else it will trouble my brain to think of it."—Sir William Fitzwilliam to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xi.

³ Henry VIII. to Wyatt: *Nott's Wyatt*.

⁴ Cromwell to Wyatt, November 29, 1537: *Nott's Wyatt*.

⁵ Better known as Mary of Guise, mother of Mary Queen of Scots.

⁶ Commission of Peter Mewtas to Madame de Longueville: *State Papers*, vol. viii. p. 10.

finally, and with especial emphasis, Christina of Denmark, the young relict of the Duke of Milan, and the niece of the Emperor. The duchess was tall, handsome, and though a widow, not more than sixteen.¹ The alliance would be honourable in itself: it would be a link reconnecting England with the Empire; and, more important still, Charles in his consent would condone before the world the affront of the divorce of Catherine. One obstacle only presented itself, which, with skilful management, might perhaps prove a fresh recommendation. In the eyes of all persons of the Roman communion the marriage with Catherine was of course considered valid, and the lady stood towards her aunt's husband within the degrees of affinity in which marriage was unlawful without a dispensation from the Pope. This certainly was a difficulty; but it was possible that Charles's anxiety for the connection might induce him to break the knot, and break with the Papacy. On the Duchess of Milan, therefore, the choice of the English government rested; and in January Sir Thomas Wyatt was directed to suggest to the Emperor, as of his own motion, that his niece would be a fit wife for the king.² The hint was caught at with gracious eagerness. Mendoza instantly received instructions to make the proposal in form, and, as if this single union was insufficient, to desire at the same time that Henry would bestow the Lady Mary on Don Louis of Portugal. Henry acquiesced, and, seeing Charles so forward, added to his acquiescence the yet further suggestion that the Prince of Wales should be betrothed to the Emperor's daughter, and Elizabeth to one of the many sons of the King of the Romans.³ Both princes appeared to be overflowing with cordiality. Charles repeated his promises, that when peace was concluded with France, the King of England should be a contracting party. The Queen Regent wrote to Cromwell, thanking him for his zeal in forwarding the Emperor's interests with his master.⁴ The Duchess of Milan sate for her picture to Holbein for Henry's cabinet,⁵ and professed for herself that she was wholly at her uncle's disposal.⁶ Commissioners

¹ Hutton to Sir Thomas Wriothesley: *State Papers*, vol. viii. p. 9.

² Henry VIII. to Sir Thomas Wyatt: *Norr's Wyatt*.

³ Same to the same: *Norr's Wyatt*.

⁴ *State Papers*, vol. viii. p. 17.

⁵ Hutton to Cromwell: *ibid.*

⁶ A story passes current with popular historians, that the Duchess of Milan, when Henry proposed for her, replied that she had but one head; if she had two, one should be at his Majesty's service. The less active imagination of contemporaries was contented with reporting that she had said that the English ministers need not trouble themselves to make

had only to be appointed to draw the marriage treaty, and all might at once be arranged. The dispensation so far had not been mentioned. Mendoza, indeed, had again pressed Henry to accept the Emperor's good offices at the Vatican; but he had been met with a refusal so absolute as to forbid the further mooting of the question; and the negotiations for these several alliances being continued as amicably as before, the king flattered himself that the difficulty was waived, or else would be privately disposed of.

Either the Emperor's true intentions were better known in Paris than in London, or Francis was alarmed at the rapid friendship, and desired to chill down its temperature. While gracious messages and compliments were passing between England and Spain and Flanders, the Bishop of Tarbes was sent over with an offer on the part of the French to make Henry sole mediator in the peace, and with a promise that, in the matter of the general council, and in all other things, Francis would be

the marriage; "they would lose their labours, for she minded not to fix her heart that way." Sir Thomas Wriothesley, who was then resident at Brussels, thought it worth his while to ask her whether these words had really been used by her.

"M. Ambassador," she replied, "I thank God He hath given me a better stay of myself than to be of so light sort. I assure you, that neither those words that you have spoken, nor any like to them, have passed at any time from my mouth; and so I pray you report for me."

Wriothesley took courage upon this answer, and asked what was her real inclination in the matter.

"At this she blushed exceedingly. 'As for mine inclination,' quoth she, 'what should I say? You know I am at the Emperor's commandment.' 'Yea, madam,' quoth Wriothesley; 'but this matter is of such nature, that there must be a concurrence between his commandment and your consent, or else you may percase repent it when it shall be too late. Your answer is such as may serve both for your modesty and for my satisfaction; and yet, if it were a little plainer, I could be the better contented.' With that she smiled, and again said, 'You know I am the Emperor's poor servant, and must follow his pleasure.' 'Marry,' quoth Wriothesley, 'then I may hope to be among the Englishmen that shall be first acquainted with my new mistress, for the Emperor hath instantly desired it. Oh, madam!' quoth he, 'how happy shall you be if it be your chance to be matched with my master. If God send you that hap, you shall be matched with the most gentle gentleman that liveth; his nature so benign and pleasant, that I think till this day no man hath heard many angry words pass his lips. As God shall help me, if he were no king, I think, an you saw him, you would say, that for his virtue, gentleness, wisdom, experience, goodness of person, and all other qualities meet to be in a prince, he were worthy before all others to be made a king.' . . . She smiled, and Wriothesley thought would have laughed out, had not her gravity forbidden it. . . . She said she knew his Majesty was a good and noble prince. Her honest countenance, he added, and the few words that she wisely spake, together with that which he knew by her chamberers and servants, made him to think there could be no doubt of her."—*State Papers*, vol. viii. p. 146.

"his good brother and most entire friend." The Emperor, the bishop asserted on his own knowledge, was playing a part of mere duplicity. Whatever he said, or whatever others said for him, he had determined that England should not be comprehended in the treaty. The king would be left out—dropped out—in some way or other got rid of—when his friendship ceased to be of moment; and so he would find to his cost.

The warning might have been well meant, the offer might have been sincere, but the experience was too recent of the elastic character of French promises. Henry refused to believe that Charles was deceiving him; he replied with a declaration of his full confidence in the Emperor's honour, and declined with cold courtesy the counter-advances of his rival. Yet he was less satisfied than he desired to appear. He sent to Sir T. Wyatt an account of the Bishop of Tarbes's expressions, desiring him to acquaint the Emperor with their nature, and with the answer which he had returned; but hinting at the same time, that although the general language of the Flemish and Spanish courts was as warm as he could desire, yet so far it amounted only to words. The proposal to constitute him sole mediator in the peace was an advance upon the furthest positive step towards him which had been taken by Charles, and he requested a direct engagement in writing, both as to his comprehension in the intended treaty, and on the equally important subject alluded to by the bishop, of the approaching council.¹

Meanwhile the marriages, if once they were completed, would be a security for good faith in other matters; and on this point no difficulties were interposed till the middle of the spring. The amount of dotes and dowries, with the securities for their payment, the conditions under which Mary was to succeed to the crown, and other legal details, were elaborately discussed. At length, when the substance seemed all to be determined, and the form only to remain, the first official conference was opened on the 5th of April, with the Spanish commissioners, who, as was supposed, had come to London for that single and special purpose. The card castle so carefully raised crumbled into

¹ "Mr. Wyatt, now handle this matter in such earnest sort with the Emperor, as the king, who by your fair words hath conceived as certain to find assured friendship therein, be not deceived. The Frenchmen affirm so constantly and boldly that nothing spoken by the Emperor, either touching the principal contrahents or further alliance, hath any manner of good faith, but such fraud and deceit, that I assure you, on my faith, it would make any man to suspect his proceeding. Labour, Mr. Wyatt, to cause the Emperor, if it be possible, to write."—Cromwell to Wyatt Norr's *Wyatt*, p. 333.

instant ruins—the solid ground was unsubstantial air. The commissioners had no commission: they would agree to nothing, arrange nothing, promise nothing. "I never heard so many gay words, and saw so little effect ensue of the same," wrote Cromwell in the passion of his disappointment; "I begin to perceive that there is scarce any good faith in this world."

Henry's eyes were opening, but opening slowly and reluctantly. Though irritated for the moment, he listened readily to the excuses with which Charles was profusely ready; and if Charles had not been intentionally treacherous, he reaped the full advantage of the most elaborate deception. In the same month it was arranged between the courts of France and Spain that the truce should, if possible, become a peace. The place of mediator, which Henry had rejected at the hands of France, had been offered to and accepted by the Pope, and the consequences foretold by the Bishop of Tarbes were now obviously imminent. Paul had succeeded at last, it seemed, in his great object—the two Catholic powers were about to be united. The effect of this reconciliation, brought about by such means, would be followed in all likelihood by a renewal of the project for an attack on the Reformation, and on all its supporters. Nice was chosen for the scene of the great event of pacification, which was to take place in June. The two sovereigns were to be present in person; the Pope would meet them, and sanctify the reconciliation with his blessing.

The Emperor continued, notwithstanding the change of circumstances, to use the same language of friendship towards Henry, and professed to be as anxious as ever for the maintenance of his connection with England. Wyatt himself partially, but not entirely, distrusted him, until his conduct no longer admitted any construction but the worst.

The affair at Nice was the central incident of the summer. Wyatt went thither in Charles's train. Paul came accompanied by Pole. Many English were present belonging to both parties: royal emissaries as spies—passionate Catholic exiles, flushed with hope and triumph. We see them, indistinctly, winding into one another's confidence—"practising" to worm out secrets—treachery undermined by greater treachery; and, at last, expectations but half gratified, a victory left but half gained. The two princes refused to see each other. They communicated only through the Pope. In the end, terms of actual peace could not be agreed upon. The conferences closed with the signature of a general truce, to last for ten years. One marked con-

solation only the Pope obtained. Notwithstanding the many promises, Henry's name was not so much as mentioned by the Emperor. He was left out, as Wyatt expressed it, "at the cart's tail." Against him the Pope remained free to intrigue and the princes free to act, could Pole or his master prevail upon them. The secret history of the proceedings cannot be traced in this place, if indeed the materials exist which allow them to be traced satisfactorily. With infinite comfort, however, in the midst of the diplomatic trickeries, we discover one little island of genuine life on which to rest for a few moments—a group, distinctly visible, of English flesh and blood existences.

Henry, unable, even after the Nice meeting had been agreed upon, to relinquish his hopes of inducing other princes to imitate his policy towards Rome, was determined, notwithstanding avowals of reluctance on the part of Charles, that his arguments should have a hearing; and, as the instrument of persuasion, he had selected the facile and voluble Dr. Bonner. Charles was on his way to the congress when the appointment was resolved upon.

Bonner crossed France to meet him; but the Emperor, either distrustful of his ability to cope with so skilful a polemic, or too busy to be trifled with, declined resolutely to have anything to do with him. Bonner was thus thrown upon Wyatt's hospitality, and was received by him at Villa Franca, where, for convenience and economy, the English embassy had secured apartments remote from the heat and crowd in Nice itself. Sir John Mason, Mr. Blage, and other friends of the ambassadors, were of the party. The future Bishop of London, it seems, though accepted as their guest, was not admitted to their intimacy; and, being set aside in his own special functions, he determined to console himself in a solid and substantial manner for the slight which had been cast upon him. In an evil hour for himself, three years after, he tried to revenge himself on Wyatt's coldness by accusations of loose living, and other calumnies. Wyatt, after briefly disposing of the charges against his own actions, retorted with a sketch of Bonner's.

"Come, now, my Lord of London," he said, "what is my abominable and vicious living? Do ye know it, or have ye heard it? I grant I do not profess chastity—but yet I use not abomination. If ye know it, tell with whom and when. If ye heard it, who is your author? Have you seen me have any harlot in my house while you were in my company? Did you ever see a woman so much as dine or sup at my table? None

but, for your pleasure, the woman that was in the galley—which, I assure you, may be well seen—for, before you came, neither she nor any other woman came above the mast; but because the gentlemen took pleasure to see you entertain her, therefore they made her dine and sup with you. And they liked well your looks—your carving to Madonna—your drinking to her—and your playing under the table. Ask Mason—ask Blage—ask Wolf that was my steward. They can tell how the gentlemen marked it and talked of it. It was play to them, the keeping your bottles, that no man might drink of them but yourself, and that the little fat priest was a jolly morsel for the signora. This was their talk. It was not my device. Ask others whether I do lie.”¹

Such was Bonner. The fame, or infamy, which he earned for himself in later years condemns his minor vices to perpetual memory; or perhaps it is a relief to find that he was linked to mankind by participating in their more venial frailties.

Leaving Nice, with its sunny waters, and intrigues, and dissipations, we return to England.

Here the tide, which had been checked for awhile by the rebellion, was again in full flow. The abbey within the compass of the act had fallen, or were rapidly falling. Among these the demolition was going actively forward. Among the larger houses fresh investigations were bringing secrets into light which would soon compel a larger measure of destruction. The restoration of discipline, which had been hoped for, was found impossible. Monks, who had been saturated with habits of self-indulgence, mutinied and became unmanageable when confined within the convent walls.² Abbots in the confidence of the government were accused as heretics. Catholic abbots were denounced as traitors. Countless letters lie among the State Papers, indicating in a thousand ways that the last hour of monasticism was approaching; that by no care of government, no efforts to put back the clock of time, could their sickly vitality be longer sustained. Everywhere, as if conscious that their days were numbered, the fraternities were preparing for evil

¹ Wyatt's Oration to the Judges: *Norr's Wyatt*.

² “I have received three houses since I wrote last to your lordship, the which I think would not a little have moved your lordship, if ye had known the order of them: some sticking fast in windows, naked, going to drabs, so that the pillar was fain to be sawed, to have him out; some being plucked from under drabs' beds; some fighting, so that the knife hath stuck in the bones; with such other pretty business, of the which I have too much.”—Richard suffragan Bishop of Dover to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 198.

days by disposing of their relics,¹ secreting or selling their plate and jewels, cutting down the timber on the estates, using in all directions their last opportunity of racking out their properties. Many, either from a hope of making terms for themselves, or from an honest sense that they were unfit to continue, declared voluntarily that they would burden the earth no longer, and voted their own dissolution. "We do profoundly consider," said the warden and friars of St. Francis in Stamford, "that the perfection of a Christian living doth not consist in douce ceremonies, wearing of a grey coat, disguising ourselves after strange fashions, ducking and becking, girding ourselves with a girdle of knots, wherein we have been misled in times past; but the very true way to please God, and to live like Christian men without hypocrisy or feigned dissimulation, is sincerely declared unto us by our master Christ, his Evangelists and Apostles. Being minded, therefore, to follow the same, conforming ourselves unto the will and pleasure of our Supreme Head under God in earth, and not to follow henceforth superstitious traditions, we do, with mutual assent and consent, surrender and yield up all our said house, with all its lands and tenements, beseeching the king's good grace to dispose of us as shall best stand with his most gracious pleasure."²

"We," said the prior and convent of St. Andrews, "called religious persons, taking on us the habit and outward vesture of our rule, only to the intent to lead our lives in idle quietness, and not in virtuous exercise, in a stately estimation, and not in obedient humility, have, under the shadow of the said rule, vainly, detestably, and ungodly devoured the yearly revenues of our possessions in continual ingurgitations and farcings of our bodies, and other supporters of our voluptuous and carnal appetites, to the manifest subversion of devotion and cleanness of living, and to the most notable slander of Christ's holy Evangile, withdrawing from the minds of his Grace's subjects the truth and comfort which they ought to have by the faith of Christ, and also the honour due to the glorious majesty of God Almighty, stirring them with persuasions, engines, and policy, to dead images and counterfeit relics for our damnable lucre; which our horrible abominations and long-covered hypocrisy, we revolving daily, and pondering in our sorrowful hearts,

¹ A finger of St. Andrew was pawned at Northampton for £40; "which we intend not," wrote a dry visitor, "to redeem of the price, except we be commanded so to do."—*Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 172.

² Printed in FULLER'S *Church History*, vol. iii. p. 394.

constrained by the anguish of our consciences, with hearts most contrite and repentant, do lamentably crave his Highness' most gracious pardon"—they also submitting and surrendering their house.¹

Six years had passed since four brave Suffolk peasants had burnt the rood at Dovercourt; and for their reward had received a gallows and a rope. The high powers of state were stepping now along the road which these men had pioneered, discovering, after all, that the road was the right road, and that the reward had been altogether an unjust one. The "materials" of monastic religion were the real or counterfeit relics of real or counterfeit saints, and images of Christ or the Virgin, supposed to work miraculous cures upon pilgrims, and not supposed, but ascertained, to bring in a pleasant and abundant revenue to their happy possessors. A special investigation into the nature of these objects of popular devotion was now ordered, with results which more than any other exposure disenchanting the people with superstition, and converted their faith into an equally passionate iconoclasm. At Hales in Worcestershire was a phial of blood, as famous for its powers and properties as the blood of St. Januarius at Naples. The phial was opened by the visitors in the presence of an awe-struck multitude. No miracle punished the impiety. The mysterious substance was handled by profane fingers, and was found to be a mere innocent gum, and not blood at all, adequate to work no miracle either to assist its worshippers or avenge its violation.² Another rare treasure was preserved at Cardigan. The story of our Lady's taper there has a picturesque wildness, of which later ages may

¹ FULLER'S *Church History*, vol. iii. p. 398.

² "According to your commission, we have viewed a certain supposed relic, called the blood of Hales, which was enclosed within a round beryll, garnished and bound on every side with silver, which we caused to be opened in the presence of a great multitude of people. And the said supposed relic we caused to be taken out of the said beryll, and have viewed the same, being within a little glass, and also tried the same according to our powers, by all means; and by force of the view and other trials, we judge the substance and matters of the said supposed relic to be an unctuous gum, coloured, which, being in the glass, appeared to be a glistening red, resembling partly the colour of blood. And after, we did take out part of the said substance out of the glass, and then it was apparent yellow colour, like amber or base gold, and doth cleave as gum or bird-lime. The matter and feigned relic, with the glass containing the same, we have enclosed in red wax, and consigned it, with our seals."—Hugh Bishop of Worcester, with the other Commissioners, to Cromwell: LATIMER'S *Remains*, p. 407.

The Abbot of Hales subsequently applied for permission to destroy the case in which the blood had been.

"It doth stand yet in the place where it was, so that I am afraid lest

admire the legendary beauty, being relieved by three centuries of incredulity from the necessity of raising harsh alternatives of truth or falsehood. An image of the Virgin had been found, it was said, standing at the mouth of the Tivy river, with an infant Christ in her lap, and the taper in her hand burning. She was carried to Christ Church, in Cardigan, but "would not tarry there." She returned again and again to the spot where she was first found; and a chapel was at last built there to receive and shelter her. In this chapel she remained for nine years, the taper burning, yet not consuming, till some rash Welshman swore an oath by her, and broke it; and the taper at once went out, and never could be kindled again. The visitors had no leisure for sentiment. The image was torn from its shrine. The taper was found to be a piece of painted wood, and on experiment was proved submissive to a last conflagration.¹

Kings are said to find the step a short one from deposition to the scaffold. The undeified images passed by a swift transition to the flames. The Lady of Worcester had been lately despoiled of her apparel. "I trust," wrote Latimer to the vicegerent, that "your lordship will bestow our great sibyll to some good purpose—*ut pereat memoria cum sonitu*—she hath been the devil's instrument to bring many, I fear, to eternal fire. She herself, with her old sister of Walsingham, her younger sister of Ipswich, with their two other sisters of Doncaster and Penrice, would make a jolly muster in Smithfield. They would not be all day in burning."² The hard advice was taken. The objects of the passionate devotion of centuries were rolled in carts to London as huge dishonoured lumber; and the eyes of the citizens were gratified with a more innocent immolation than those with which the church authorities had been in the habit of indulging them.

The fate of the rood of Boxley, again, was a famous incident of the time. At Boxley, in Kent, there stood an image, the eyes of which on fit occasions "did stir like a lively thing." The body bowed, the forehead frowned. It dropped its lower lip, as if to speak.³ The people in this particular rood, beyond

it should minister occasion to any weak person looking thereupon to abuse his conscience therewith; and therefore I beseech for license that I may put it down every stick and stone, so that no manner of token or remembrance of that forged relict shall remain."—Abbot of Hales to Cromwell; *MS. Tanner*, 105.

¹ Barlow to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 183.

² Latimer to Cromwell: *Remains*, p. 395.

³ Geoffrey Chambers to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series.

all others, saw the living presence of Christ, and offerings in superabundant measure had poured in upon the monks. It happened that a rationalistic commissioner, looking closely, discovered symptoms of motion at the back of the figure. Suspicion caused inquiry, and inquiry exposure. The mystery had a natural explanation in machinery. The abbot and the elder brethren took refuge in surprise, and knew nothing. But the fact was patent; and the unveiled fraud was of a kind which might be useful. "When I had seen this strange object," said the discoverer, "and considering that the inhabitants of the county of Kent had in times past a great devotion to the same image, and did keep continual pilgrimage thither, by the advice of others that were here with me, I did convey the said image unto Maidstone on the market day; and in the chief of the market time did shew it openly unto all the people then being present, to see the false, crafty, and subtle handling thereof, to the dishonour of God and illusion of the said people; who, I dare say, if the late monastery were to be defaced again (the King's Grace not offended), they would either pluck it down to the ground, or else burn it; for they have the said matter in wondrous detestation and hatred."¹

But the rood was not allowed to be forgotten after a single exhibition; the imposture was gross, and would furnish a wholesome comment on the suppression, if it was shown off in London. From Maidstone, therefore, it was taken to the palace at Whitehall, and performed before the court.² From the palace it was carried on to its last judgment and execution at Paul's Cross. It was placed upon a stage opposite the pulpit, and passed through its postures, while the Bishop of Rochester lectured upon it in a sermon. When the crowd was worked into adequate indignation, the scaffold was made to give way, the image fell, and in a few moments was torn in pieces.

Thus in all parts of England superstition was attacked in its strongholds, and destroyed there. But the indignation which was the natural recoil from credulity would not be satisfied with the destruction of images. The idol was nothing. The guilt was not with the wood and stone, but in the fraud and folly

¹ Geoffrey Chambers to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series.

² "Invisit aulam regis, regem ipsum novus hospes. Conglomerant ipsum risu aulico barones duces marchiones comites. Agit ille, minatur oculis, aversatur ore, distorquet nares; mittit deorsum caput, incurvat dorsum, annuit aut renuit. Rex ipse incertum gavisusne magis ob patefactam imposturam an magis doluerit ex animo tot seculis miseræ plebi fuisse impositum."—Hooker to Bullinger: *Original Letters on the Reformation*.

which had practised with these brute instruments against the souls of men. In Scotland and the Netherlands the work of retribution was accomplished by a rising of the people themselves in armed revolution. In England the readiness of the government spared the need of a popular explosion; the monasteries were not sacked by mobs, or the priests murdered; but the same fierceness, the same hot spirit of anger was abroad, though confined within the restraints of the law. The law itself gave effect, in harsh and sanguinary penalties, to the rage which had been kindled.

The punishments under the Act of Supremacy were not wholly frightful. No governments can permit their subjects to avow an allegiance to an alien and hostile power; and the executions were occasioned, I have observed already, by the same necessity, and must be regarded with the same feelings, as the deaths of brave men in battle, who, in questions of life and death, take their side to kill others or be killed. A blind animosity now betrays itself in an act of needless cruelty, for the details of which no excuse can be pleaded by custom or precedent, which clouds the memory of the greatest of the Reformers, and can be endured only, when regarded at a distance, as an instance of the wide justice of Providence, which punishes wrong by wrong, and visits on single men the offences of thousands.

Forest, the late Prior of the Observants Convent at Greenwich, since the dissolution of his order in consequence of the affair of the Nun of Kent, had halted between a state of concealed disaffection and pretended conformity. In his office of confessor he was found to have instructed his penitents that, for himself, "he had denied the Bishop of Rome in his outward, but not in his inward man;" and he had encouraged them, notwithstanding their oath, to persevere in their old allegiance. He had thus laid himself open to prosecution for treason; and whatever penalty was due to an avowal of being the Pope's liege-man had been doubly earned by treachery. If he had been tried and had suffered like Sir Thomas More and the monks of the Charterhouse, his sentence would have ranked with theirs. The same causes which explained the executions of honourable men would have applied with greater force to that of one who had deepened his offences by duplicity. But the crown prosecutors, for some unknown reason, bestowed upon him a distinction in suffering.

When first arrested he was terrified: he acknowledged his

offences, submitted, and was pardoned. But his conscience recovered its strength: he returned to his loyalty to the Papacy; he declared his belief that, in matters spiritual, the Pope was his proper sovereign, that the Bishop of Rochester was a martyr, as Thomas à Becket had been a martyr. Becket he held up as the pattern of all churchmen's imitation, courting for himself Becket's fortunes.¹ Like others, he attempted a distinction in the nature of allegiance. "In matters secular his duty was to his prince." But, on the threshold of the exception lay the difficulty which no Catholic could evade—what was the duty of a subject when a king was excommunicated, and declared to have forfeited his crown?

Forest, therefore, fell justly under the treason law. But, inasmuch as Catholic churchmen declared the denial of the Pope's supremacy to be heresy, so, for a few unfortunate months, English churchmen determined the denial of the king's supremacy to be heresy; Forest was to be proceeded against for an offence against spiritual truth as well as a crime against the law of the land; and Cranmer is found corresponding with Cromwell on the articles on which he was to be examined.² I do not know that the document which I am about to quote was composed for this special occasion. For the first, and happily the last time, the meaning of it was acted upon.

In an official paper of about this date, I find "heresy" defined to be "that which is against Scripture." "To say, therefore, that Peter and his successors be heads of the universal Church, and stand stubbornly in it, is heresy, because it is against Scripture (Ecclesiastes v.); where it is written, 'In-

¹ "He said that blessed man St. Thomas of Canterbury suffered death for the rights of the Church; for there was a great man—meaning thereby King Harry the Second—which, because St. Thomas of Canterbury would not grant him such things as he asked, contrary to the liberties of the Church, first banished him out of this realm; and at his return he was slain at his own church, for the right of Holy Church, as many holy fathers have suffered now of late: as that holy father the Bishop of Rochester: and he doubteth not but their souls be now in heaven.

"He saith and believeth that he ought to have a double obedience: first, to the King's Highness, by the law of God; and the second to the Bishop of Rome, by his rule and profession.

"He confesseth that he used and practised to induce men in confession to hold and stick to the old fashion of belief, that was used in the realm of long time past."—*Rolls House MS.*

² "The Bishop of Worcester and I will be to-morrow with your lordship, to know your pleasure concerning Friar Forest. For if we should proceed against him according to the order of the law, there must be articles devised beforehand which must be ministered unto him; and therefore it will be very well done that one draw them against our meeting."—Cranmer to Cromwell: *CRANMER'S Works*, vol. i. p. 239.

super universæ terræ rex imperat servienti'—that is to say, the king commandeth the whole country as his subjects; and therefore it followeth that the Bishop of Rome, which is in Italy where the Emperor is king, is subject to the Emperor, and that the Emperor may command him; and if he should be head of the universal Church, then he should be head over the Emperor, and command the Emperor, and that is directly against the said text, Ecclesiastes v. Wherefore, to stand in it opinatively is heresy."¹ In the spirit, if not in the letter of this monstrous reasoning, Forest was indicted for heresy in a court where we would gladly believe that Cranmer did not sit as president. He was found guilty, and was delivered over, in the usual form, to the secular arm.

An accidental coincidence contributed to the dramatic effect of his execution. In a chapel at Llan Dderfel, in North Wales, there had stood a figure of an ancient Welsh saint, called Dderfel Gadern. The figure was a general favourite. The Welsh people "came daily in pilgrimage to him, some with kype, some with oxen and horses, and the rest with money, insomuch" (I quote a letter of Ellis Price, the Merionethshire visitor) "that there were five or six hundred, to a man's estimation, that offered to the said image the fifth day of this month of April. The innocent people hath been sore allured and enticed to worship, insomuch that there is a common saying amongst them that, whosoever will offer anything to the image of Dderfel Gadern, he hath power to fetch him or them that so offer, out of hell."² The visitor desired to know what he should do with Dderfel Gadern, and received orders to despatch the thing at once to London. The parishioners offered to subscribe forty pounds to preserve their profitable possession,³ but in vain—Cromwell was ruthless. The image was sent to the same destination with the rest of his kind; and, arriving opportunely, it was hewn into fuel to form the pile where the victim of the new heresy court was to suffer.

A day at the end of May was fixed for Forest's death. Latimer was selected to preach on the occasion; and a singular letter remains from him from which I try to gather that he accepted reluctantly the ungrateful service. "Sir," he addressed Cromwell, "if it be your pleasure, as it is, that I shall play the fool after my customable manner when Forest shall

¹ *Rolls House MS. A 1, 7, fol. 213.*

² *Ellis Price to Cromwell: MS. Cotton. Cleopatra, E 4.*

³ *MS. State Paper Office, second series, vol. xxxiv.*

suffer, I would wish that my stage stood near unto Forest, for I would endeavour myself so to content the people, that therewith I might also convert Forest, God so helping, or, rather, altogether working. Wherefore, I would that he shall hear what I shall say—*si forte*. If he would yet, with his heart, return to his abjuration, I would wish his pardon. Such is my foolishness.”¹ The gleam of pity, though so faint and feeble that it seemed a thing to be ashamed of, is welcome from that hard time. The preparations were made with a horrible completeness. It was the single supremacy case which fell to the conduct of ecclesiastics; and ecclesiastics of all professions, in all ages, have been fertile in ingenious cruelty. A gallows was erected over the stake, from which the wretched victim was to be suspended in a cradle of chains. When the machinery was complete, and the chips of the idol lay ready, he was brought out and placed upon a platform. The Lord Mayor, the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, Lord Southampton, and Cromwell were present with a pardon, if at the last moment his courage should fail, and he would ask for it. The sermon began. It was of the usual kind—the passionate language of passionate conviction. When it was over, Latimer turned to Forest, and asked him whether he would live or die. “I will die,” was the gallant answer. “Do your worst upon me. Seven years ago you durst not, for your life, have preached such words as these; and now, if an angel from heaven should come down and teach me any other doctrine than that which I learnt as a child, I would not believe him. Take me; cut me to pieces, joint from joint. Burn—hang—do what you will—I will be true henceforth to my faith.”² It was enough. He was laid upon his iron bed, and slung off into the air, and the flame was kindled. In his mortal agony he clutched at the steps of the ladder, to sway himself out of the blaze; and the pitiless chronicler, who records the scene, could see only in this last weakness an evidence of guilt. “So impatiently,” says Hall, “he took his death as never any man that put his trust in God.”³

Still the torrent rolled onward. Monasteries and images were gone, and fancied relics, in endless numbers. There remained the peculiar treasures of the great abbeys and cathedrals—the mortal remains of the holy men in whose memories they had

¹ Latimer to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xlix.; *LATIMER'S Letters*, p. 391.

² *STOW'S Chronicle*, p. 575.

³ *HALL*, p. 875, followed by *FOXÉ*.

been founded, who by martyrs' deaths, or lives of superhuman loftiness, had earned the veneration of later ages. The bodies of the saints had been gathered into costly shrines, which a beautiful piety had decorated with choicest offerings. In an age which believed, without doubt or pretence, that the body of a holy man was incorporated into the body of Christ, that the seeming dust was pure as Christ's body was pure, and would form again the living home of the spirit which had gone away but for awhile, such dust was looked upon with awe and pious fear. Sacred influences were imagined to exhale from it. It was a divine thing, blessed and giving blessing. Alas! that the noblest feelings can pass so swiftly into their opposites, that reverend simplicity should become the parent of a miserable superstition! The natural instinct of veneration had ossified into idolatry, and saints' bones became charms and talismans. The saints themselves became invisible under the swathings of lies. The serpent of healing had become a Nehushtan—an accursed thing, and, with the system to which it belonged, was to pass away and come no more.

The sheriffs and magistrates of the various counties received circulars from the vicegerent, directing that "whereas prayers were offered at the shrines which were due to God only, that the honour which belonged to the Creator was by a notable superstition given to the creature, and ignorant people, enticed by the clergy, had fallen thereby into great error and idolatry," they were to repair severally to the cathedrals, churches, or chapels in which any such shrine might be. The relics, reliquaries, gold, silver, or jewels, which they contained, were to be taken out and sent to the king; and they were to see with their own eyes the shrine itself levelled to the ground, and the pavement cleared of it.¹ The order was fulfilled with or without reluctance. Throughout England, by the opening of the year 1539, there was nothing left to tell of the presence of the saints but the names which clung to the churches which they had built, or the shadowy memories which hung about their desecrated tombs.

¹ *MS. State Paper Office*, unarranged bundle. The command was obeyed so completely, that only a single shrine now remains in England; and the preservation of this was not owing to the forbearance of the government. The shrine of Edward the Confessor, which stands in Westminster Abbey, was destroyed with the rest. But the stones were not taken away. The supposed remains of St. Edward were in some way preserved; and the shrine was reconstructed, and the dust replaced, by Abbot Feckenham, in the first year of Queen Mary.—Oration of Abbot Feckenham in the Parliament House: *MS. Rawlinson, Bodleian Library*.

Only in one instance was the demolition of a shrine marked by anything peculiar.

The aim from the beginning of the movement, both of the king and the parliament, had been to represent their measures not as new things, but as a reassertion of English independence, a revival of the historical policy of the English kings. From the defeat of Henry II., on the death of Becket, to the accession of the house of Lancaster, the Plantagenet princes had fought inch by inch for the recovery of the ground which had been lost. After sleeping a century and a half, the battle had recommenced; and the crown was determined to inaugurate its victories by the disgrace and destruction of the famous champion whose spirit still seemed to linger in the field. On the 18th of August Cranmer informed the vicegerent that he suspected that the blood of St. Thomas of Canterbury shown in the cathedral was an imposture, like the blood of Hales, "a feigned thing, made of some red ochre, or such like matter."¹ He desired that there might be an investigation, and mentioned Dr. Legh and his own chaplain as persons fitted for the conduct of it. The request appears to have been granted, and the suspicion about the blood to have been confirmed.² The opportunity was taken to settle accounts in full with the hero of the English Church. On the 30th of September the shrine and the relics were shown, perhaps for the last time, to Madame de Montreuil and a party of French ladies.³ In the following month the bones of the martyr who for centuries had been venerated throughout Europe, which peers and princes had crossed the seas to look upon, which tens of thousands of pilgrims year after year for all those ages had crowded to reverence, were torn from their hallowed resting-place, and burnt to powder, and scattered to the winds. The golden

¹ Cranmer to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. i.

² "The abuses of Canterbury" are placed by the side of those of Boxley in one of the official statements of the times.—Sir T. Wriothesley to Henry VIII. Nov. 20, 1538: *State Papers*, vol. viii.

³ Madame de Montreuil, though a Frenchwoman and a good Catholic, had caught the infection of the prevailing unbelief in saints and saintly relics. "I showed her St. Thomas's shrine," writes an attendant, "and all such other things worthy of sight, of the which she was not little marvelled of the great riches thereof, saying it to be innumerable, and that if she had not seen it all the men in the world could never have made her to believe it. Thus overlooking and viewing more than an hour as well the shrine as St. Thomas's head, being at both set cushions to kneel, the prior, opening St. Thomas's head, said to her three times, this is St. Thomas's head, and offered her to kiss it, but she neither kneeled nor would kiss it, but (stood), still viewing the riches thereof."—Penison to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 583.

plating of the shrine, the emeralds and rubies, the votive offerings of the whole Christian world, were packed in chests, and despatched to the treasury. The chiselled stone was splintered with hammers. The impressions worn upon the pavement by the millions of knees¹ which had bent in adoration there, alone remained to tell of the glory which had been. Simultaneously with the destruction of his remains, Becket's name was erased out of the service-books, the innumerable church windows in which his history was painted were broken, the day which commemorated his martyrdom was forbidden to be observed; and in explanation of so exceptional a vehemence an official narrative was published by the government of the circumstances of his end, in which he was described as a traitor to the state, who had perished in a scuffle provoked by his own violence.²

The executions of More and Fisher had convulsed Europe; but the second shock was felt as much more deeply than the first as the glory of the saint is above the fame of the highest of living men. The impious tyrant, it now seemed, would transfer his warfare even into heaven, and dethrone the gods. The tomb of Becket was the property of Christendom rather than of

¹ These marks are still distinctly visible.

² BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 494. A story was current on the Continent, and so far believed as to be alluded to in the great bull of Paul the Third, that an apparitor was sent to Canterbury to serve a citation at Becket's tomb, summoning "the late archbishop" to appear and answer to a charge of high treason. Thirty days were allowed him. When these were expired a proctor was charged with his defence. He was tried and condemned—his property, consisting of the offerings at the shrine, was declared forfeited—and he himself was sentenced to be exhumed and burnt. In the fact itself there is nothing absolutely improbable, for the form said to have been observed was one which was usual in the Church, when dead men, as sometimes happened, were prosecuted for heresy; and if I express my belief that the story is without foundation, I do so with diffidence, because negative evidence is generally of no value in the face of respectable positive assertion. All contemporary English authorities, however, are totally silent on a subject which it is hard to believe that they would not at least have mentioned. We hear generally of the destruction of the shrine, but no word of the citation and trial. A long and close correspondence between Cromwell and the Prior of Canterbury covers the period at which the process took place, if it took place at all, and not a letter contains anything which could be construed into an allusion to it.—Letters of the Prior of Canterbury to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series.

So suspicious a silence justifies a close scrutiny of the authorities on the other side. There exist two documents printed in WILKINS'S *Concilia*, vol. iii. p. 835, and taken from POLLINI'S *History of the English Reformation*, which profess to be the actual citation and actual sentence issued on the occasion. If these are genuine, they decide the question; but, unfortunately for their authenticity, the dates of the documents are, respectively, April and May, 1538, and in both of them Henry is styled, among his official titles, *Rex Hiberniæ*. Now Henry did not assume the title of Rex

England. There was scarcely a princely or a noble family on the Continent some member of which had not at one time or other gone thither on pilgrimage, whose wealth had not contributed something to the treasure which was now seized for the royal coffers. A second act had opened in the drama—a crisis fruitful in great events at home and abroad.

The first immediate effect was on the treaty for the king's marriage. Notwithstanding the trifling of the commissioners in April—notwithstanding the pacification of Nice, and the omission of the king's name among the contracting parties—Charles succeeded in persuading Wyatt that he was as anxious as ever for the completion of the entire group of the proposed connections; and Henry, on his part, was complacently credulous. The country was impatient to see him provided with a wife who might be the mother of a Duke of York. Day after day the council remonstrated with him on the loss of precious time;¹ and however desirable in itself the imperial alliance appeared, his subjects were more anxious that he should be rapidly married somewhere, than that even for such an object there should be longer delay.

Charles meanwhile, on his side, continued to give fair words; and the king, although warned, as he avowed, on all sides, to put no faith in them, refused to believe that Charles would cloud his reputation with so sustained duplicity; and in August he sent Sir Thomas Wriothesley to Flanders, to obtain, if possible, some concluding answer.

The Regent, in receiving Wriothesley, assured him that his *Hiberniæ* till two years later. *Dominus Hiberniæ*, or Lord of Ireland, is his invariable designation in every authentic document of the year to which these are said to belong. This itself is conclusively discrediting. If further evidence is required, it may be found in the word "*Londini*," or London, as the date of both citation and sentence. Official papers were never dated from London, but from Westminster, St. James's, Whitehall; or if in London, then from the particular place in London, as the Tower. Both mistakes would have been avoided by an Englishman, but are exceedingly natural in a foreign inventor.

¹ "We be daily instructed by our nobles and council to use short expedition in the determination of our marriage, for to get more increase of issue, to the assurance of our succession; and upon their oft admonition of age coming fast on, and (seeing) that the time flyeth and slippeth marvellously away, we be minded no longer to lose time as we have done, which is of all losses the most irrecoverable."—Henry VIII. to Sir T. Wriothesley: *State Papers*, vol. viii. p. 116.

"Unless his Highness bore a notable affection to the Emperor, and had a special remembrance of their antient amity, his Majesty could never have endured to have been kept thus long in balance, his years, and the daily suits of his nobles and council well pondered."—Wriothesley to Cromwell: *ibid.* p. 160.

master's confidence was well placed—that "the Emperor was a prince of honour," and never meant "to proceed with any practice of dissimulation." Whatever others might choose to say, both she and her brother remained in one mind and purpose, and desired nothing better than to see the Duchess Christina Queen of England.¹ Her language remained similarly cordial till the beginning of October; and, as the least violent hypothesis is generally the safest, it may be believed that till this time the Emperor had really entertained, or had not as yet relinquished, the intention of bestowing his niece as he professed to wish. But from the end of the autumn the tide turned, and soon flowed visibly the other way. There was no abrupt conclusion—the preliminaries were wearily argued day after day. The English minister was still treated with courtesy; but his receptions had lost their warmth, and with court and people his favour chilled with the changing season. He was taunted with the English apostasy from the Church. "It is said that religion is extinct among us," he wrote in November—"that we have no masses—that the saints are burned—and all that was taken for holy clearly subverted."² Each day the prospect became visibly darker: from cordiality there was a change to politeness—from politeness to distance—from distance to something like a menace of hostility. The alteration can without difficulty be interpreted.

The intentions of the Papal court had been made known by Michael Throgmorton, in his letter to Cromwell. The Pope's movements were, perhaps, quickened when the insult to the martyr's bones became known to him. The opportunity was in every way favourable. France and Spain were at peace; the Catholic world was exasperated by the outrage at Canterbury. The hour was come—he rose upon his throne, and launched with all his might his long-forged thunderbolt. Clement's censure had been mild sheet lightning, flickering harmlessly in the distance: Paul's was the forked flash, intended to blight and kill. Reginald Pole, his faithful adherent, had by this time re-written his book: he had enriched it with calumnies, either freshly learned, or made credible in his new access of frenzy. It was now printed, and sown broadcast over Christendom. The Pope appended a postscript to his Bull of Deposition, explaining the delay in the issue: not, as he had explained that delay to Henry himself, by pretending

¹ See the Wriothesley Correspondence: *State Papers*, vol. viii.

² Wriothesley to Henry VIII. November 20, 1538: *State Papers*, vol. viii.

that he had executed no more than a form which had never been intended for use; but professing to have withheld a just and necessary punishment at the intercession of the European sovereigns. But his mercy had been despised, his long-suffering had been abused, and the monstrous king had added crime to crime, killing living priests and profaning the sepulchres of the dead. In his contempt for religion he had cited the sainted Thomas of Canterbury to be tried as a traitor; he had passed an impious sentence upon him as contumacious. The blessed bones, through which Almighty God had worked innumerable miracles, he had torn from their shrine of gold, and burnt them sacrilegiously to ashes. He had seized the treasures consecrated to Heaven; he had wasted and robbed the houses of religion; and, as he had transformed himself into a wild beast, so to the beasts of the field he had given honour beyond human beings. He had expelled the monks from their houses, and turned his cattle among the vacant ruins. These things he had done, and his crimes could be endured no longer. As a putrid member he was cut off from the Church.¹

The book and the excommunication being thus completed and issued, Pole was once more despatched to rouse the Emperor to invasion, having again laid a train to explode, as he hoped successfully, when the Spanish troops should land.

The Pope's intentions must have been made known to Charles before they were put in force, and interpret the change of treatment experienced by Wriothesley. Whether, as a sovereign prince, he would or would not consent to give the active support which was to be demanded of him, the Emperor, perhaps, had not determined even in his own mind; but at least he would not choose the opportunity to draw closer his connection with the object of the Church's censures.

On the 21st of January Wriothesley wrote to Cromwell that he had no more hopes of the Duchess of Milan, and that the king must look elsewhere. "If this marriage may not be had," he said, "I pray his Grace may fix his noble stomach in some such other place as may be to his quiet." "And then," he added, chafed with the slight which had been passed upon his sovereign, "I fear not to see the day, if God give me life but for a small season, that as his Majesty is father to all Christian kings in time of reign and excellency of wisdom, so his High-

¹ Bull of Paul III. against Henry VIII.: printed in BURNET'S *Collectedanea*.

ness shall have his neighbours in that stay that they shall be glad to do him honour and to yield unto him his own."¹

For the present, however, the feeling of the Netherlanders was of mere hostility. The ruin of England was talked of as certain and instant. James of Scotland and Francis were "to do great things," and "the Emperor, it might be, would assist them." The ambassador tossed aside their presages. "These men," said one of his despatches, "publicly tell me how the Bishop of Rome hath now given a new sentence against the King's Majesty. I discourse to them how much every of the princes of Europe is bound to his Majesty; what every of them hath to do for himself; how little need we have to care for them if they would all break their faith and for kindness show ingratitude: and I show myself, besides, of no less hope than to see his Majesty, as God's minister, correct that tyrant—that usurper of Rome—even within Rome's gates, to the glory of God, and the greatest benefit that ever came to Christendom."²

But, though Wriothesley carried himself proudly, his position was embarrassing. The regent grew daily more distant, her ministers more threatening. The Spaniards resident in England suddenly were observed to be hastening away, carrying their properties with them. At length, on the 21st of February, a proclamation was sent out laying all English ships in Flanders under arrest. Mendoza was recalled from London, and the common conversation on the Bourse at Antwerp was that the united force of France and the Empire would be thrown immediately on the English coasts.³

For a closer insight into the Emperor's conduct, I must again go back over the ground. The history at this point is woven of many fibres.

Pole's book was published in November or December. His expedition into Spain followed immediately after; and, feeling some little misgiving as to the Emperor's approbation of his conduct, he thought it prudent to prepare his appearance by a general defence of his position. A rebellious subject engaged in levying war against his sovereign might interest the Papacy; but the example might easily appear more questionable in the eyes of secular princes. His book, he said in an apology addressed to Charles, had been written originally in obedience to orders from England. He had published it when the Pope

¹ Wriothesley Correspondence: *State Papers*, vol. viii.

² Wriothesley to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. viii.

³ Stephen Vaughan to Cromwell, Feb. 21, 1539: *ibid.*

instructed him to vindicate the severity of the censures. His present duty was to expose in the European courts the iniquity of the King of England—to show that, as an adversary of the Church, he was infinitely more formidable than the Sultan—and that the arms of the Emperor, if he wished well to the interests of religion, should be specially directed against the chief offender.¹ When the king's crimes were understood in detail the Christian sovereigns would see in their enormity that such a monster must be allowed to vex the earth no longer. He recapitulated the heads of his book, and Henry's history as he there had treated it. In an invective against Cromwell he bathed his name in curses;² while the king he compared to Nero, and found the Roman tyrant innocent in the contrast. Finally, he closed his address with a peroration, in which he quoted and applied the prophecy of Daniel on the man of sin. Henry of England was the king of fierce countenance and understanding dark sentences, who was to stand up in the latter time and set himself above all that was called God; whose power should be mighty, but not by his own power; who should destroy wonderfully, and prosper, and practise, and destroy the mighty and the holy people; who should rise up against the Prince of princes, but in the end be broken without hand.³

Pole's business was to supply the eloquent persuasions. A despatch from Paul furnished the more worldly particulars which the Emperor would desire to know before engaging in an enterprise which had been discussed so often, and which did not appear more easy on closer inspection. James the Fifth, the Pope said, would be ready to assist, with his excellent minister, David Beton. If only the war with the Turks were suspended, the other difficulties might be readily overcome. The Turks could be defeated only at a great expense, and a

¹ "Of the evils which now menace Christendom those are held most grievous which are threatened by the Sultan. He is thought most powerful to hurt: he must first be met in arms. My words will bear little weight in this matter. I shall be thought to speak in my own quarrel against my personal enemy. But, as God shall judge my heart, I say that, if we look for victory in the East, we must assist first our fellow Christians, whom the adversary afflicts at home. This victory only will ensure the other."—*Apol. ad Car. Quint.*

² He speaks of Cromwell as "a certain man," a "devil's ambassador," "the devil in the human form." He doubts whether he will defile his pages with his name. As great highwaymen, however, murderers, parricides, and others, are named in history for everlasting ignominy, as even the devils are named in Holy Scripture, so he will name Cromwell.—*Apol. ad Car. Quint.*

³ *Ibid.*

victory over them would do little for religion. The heart of all the mischief in the world lay in England, in the person of the king. Charles must strike there, and minor evils would afterwards heal of themselves.¹

The English government had agents in Rome whose business was to overhear conversations, though held in the most secret closet in the Vatican; to bribe secretaries to make copies of private despatches; to practise (such was the word) for intelligence by fair means, or else by foul: and they did their work. Pole's movements and Pole's intentions were known in London as soon as they were known at Toledo; and simultaneously another fragment of information was forwarded from Italy, as important in itself, as, doubtless, the manner in which it was procured was questionable. Access was obtained, either by bribery or other form of treachery, to a letter from some person high in Paul's confidence at Rome, to the Cardinal of Seville; opportunity, perhaps, did not permit the completion of a transcript, but an analysis, with considerable extracts, found its way into the hands of Cromwell. The letter stated that an Irish nobleman, evidently the Earl of Desmond, had sent a confidential agent to the Pope to explain at length the weakness of the English authority in Ireland, to describe the impunity with which the earl had resisted and despised it, and to state further how the same illustrious personage, for the discharge of his soul, was now ready to transfer his allegiance to his Holiness. "England," so Desmond had declared, was in confusion, utter and hopeless. "Fathers were against sons, husbands against wives, the commonalty risen one against another;" . . . and "perceiving their divisions, he had been with a great part of Ireland to know their wills and minds, and also with the bishops and the religious houses; and not only the great men of power, but also the people, all with one voice would be ready to give aid against the King of England." He had added a demand which bore some witness to the energy with which Henry had strengthened the government at Dublin since the Geraldine rebellion. "Thirty thousand Spaniards," the earl said, "with all things necessary for them, with artillery, powder, ships, galleys, and pinnaces, would be required to insure the conquest." If these could be landed, Desmond would guarantee success.

¹ Instructions to Reginald Pole: *Epist.* vol. ii. p. 279, etc. Pole's admiring biographer ventures to say that "he was declared a traitor for causes which do not seem to come within the article of treason."—*PHILIPS'S Life of Reginald Pole*, p. 277.

Ireland should be re-annexed to the Holy See; and he would himself undertake the government as viceroy, paying a revenue to Paul of one hundred thousand ducats. The expedition would be costly, but the expenses would fall neither on his Holiness nor on the Emperor. Desmond, with armed privateers, would seize and deliver into the hands of the Pope the persons of a sufficient number of the heretical English, whose ransoms would defray the necessary outlay; and an insurrection in behalf of the Holy See might be anticipated with certainty in England itself.

This being the substance of the Irish message, "His Holiness, perceiving the good mind of these gentlemen in God's behalf, had determined to desire amongst all Christian kings to have aid in this matter for charity, to aid the good Christian people of Ireland."

"His Holiness says," concluded the letter, "that if at the general council amongst the kings he cannot have aid to obtain this holy work, then he will desire them that they will agree and consent that certain pardons may be received in their realms, and that they may give liberty that the bishops may constrain the commonalty to receive the said pardons, and it shall be declared that all such money shall be used for the conquest of Barbary; and that his Holiness will take upon him the said conquest of Barbary with the accord of the Emperor. If the above will not suffice, then his Holiness will give order and desire for the maintenance and defence of the holy faith, to all bishops, archbishops, cardinals, legates, deans, canons, priests, and curates, and also to all sorts of monasteries, to help with certain money which may be needful, to subdue and proceed in this good deed. And he will desire the Most Christian King of France, and also the King of Scots, to have amongst them aid in his behalf, inasmuch as they and their kingdoms is nigh to the said island of Ireland. And immediately that the fleet shall be together to go for Barbary, then shall the most part go for Ireland unto the gentleman that hath written to his Holiness to uphold the Holy See, that his Holiness may sustain Holy Mother Church from that tyrant of England, the which goes to confound the Holy See of St. Peter and the governors and ministers of it. And God give unto all good Christians strength to confound the antichrist of England and the dog Luther his brother."¹

¹ News which was sent from Rome unto the Cardinal Bishop of Seville: *Rolls House MS.*

Never, perhaps, since the beginning of time had such a provision of "ways and means" been devised for a military enterprise as was found in the financial suggestions of this Papal Hibernian war scheme. Nevertheless, when so many Spanish ships annually haunted the harbours of Munster, a few thousand men might be thrown on shore there without particular difficulty. The exchequer was in no condition to endure a repetition of the insurrection of Lord Fitzgerald, which had cost forty thousand pounds; and, with the encouragement of an auxiliary force, another similar rising, with its accompanying massacres, might be easily anticipated. Though invasion might be confidently faced in England, it was within the limits of possibility that Ireland might be permanently lost.

With such materials in their hands, more skilful antagonists than Paul III. or Cardinal Pole might have accomplished something considerable; but Paul's practical ability may be measured by his war budget; and the vanity of the English traitor would have ruined the most skilful combinations. Incapable of any higher intellectual effort than declamatory exercises, he had matched himself against the keenest and coolest statesman in Europe. He had run a mine, as he believed, under Henry's throne, to blow it to the moon; and at the expected moment of his triumph his shallow schemes were blasted to atoms, and if not himself, yet his nearest kindred and dearest friends were buried in the ruins.

Lord Darcy had said that fifteen lords and great men had been banded together to put down the Reformation. Two peers had died on the scaffold. Lord Abergavenny, the head of the Nevilles, was dead also; he was, perhaps, a third. The knights and commoners who had suffered after the Pilgrimage of Grace had not covered the whole remaining number. The names revealed by the Nun of Kent, though unknown to the world, had not been forgotten by the government. Cromwell knew where to watch, and how.

The country was still heaving uneasily from the after-roll of the insurrection, and Pole's expectations of a third commotion, it is likely, were as well known to the Privy Council as they were known to the Pope. Symptoms had appeared in the western counties strikingly resembling those which had preceded the Yorkshire rising, when Cromwell's innocent order was issued for the keeping of parish registers.¹ Rumours were continually

¹ "There is much secret communication among the king's subjects, and many of them in the shires of Cornwall and Devonshire be in great

flying that the Emperor would come and overthrow all things; and the busy haste with which the coast was being fortified seemed to sanction the expectation. The Pope had made James of Scotland *Defensor fidei*. Fleets were whispered to be on the seas. Men would wake suddenly and find the Spaniards arrived; and "harness would again be occupied."¹ Superstition on one side, and iconoclasm on the other, had dethroned reason, and raised imagination to its place; and no sagacity at such times could anticipate for an hour the form of the future.²

Pole's treason had naturally drawn suspicion on his family. The fact of his correspondence with them from Liège could fear and mistrust what the King's Highness and his council should mean, to give in commandment to the parsons and vicars of every parish, that they should make a book wherein is to be specified the names of as many as be wedded and buried and christened. Their mistrust is, that some charges more than hath been in times past shall grow to them by this occasion of registering."—Sir Piers Edgecombe to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 612.

¹ "George Lascelles shewed me that a priest, which late was one of the friars at Bristol, informed him that harness would yet be occupied, for he did know more than the king's council. For at the last council whereat the Emperor, the French king, and the Bishop of Rome met, they made the King of Scots, by their counsel, *Defensor fidei*, and that the Emperor raised a great army, saying it was to invade the Great Turk, which the said Emperor meant by our sovereign lord."—John Babington to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. iii.

² "I attach specimens from time to time of the "informations" of which the Record Office contains so many. They serve to keep the temper of the country before the mind. The king had lately fallen from his horse and broken one of his ribs. A farmer of Walden was accused of having wished that he had broken his neck, and "had said further that he had a bow and two sheaves of arrows, and he would shoot them all before the king's laws should go forward." An old woman at Aylesham, leaning over a shop window, was heard muttering a chant, that "there would be no good world till it fell together by the ears, for with clubs and clouted shoon should the deed be done." Sir Thomas Arundel wrote from Cornwall that "a very aged man" had been brought before him with the reputation of a prophet, who had said that "the priests should rise against the king, and make a field; and the priests should rule the realm three days and three nights, and then the white falcon should come out of the north-west, and kill almost all the priests, and they that should escape should be fain to hide their crowns with the filth of beasts, because they would not be taken for priests." "A groom of Sir William Paget's was dressing his master's horse one night in the stable in the White Horse in Cambridge," when the ostler came in and began "to enter into communication with him." "The ostler said there is no Pope, but a Bishop of Rome. And the groom said he knew well there was a Pope, and the ostler, moreover, and whosoever held of his part, were strong heretics. Then the ostler answered that the King's Grace held of his part; and the groom said that he was one heretic, and the king was another; and said, moreover, that this business had never been if the king had not married Anne Boleyn. And therewith they multiplied words, and waxed so hot, that the one called the other knave, and so fell together by the ears, and the groom broke the ostler's head with a faggot stick."—*Miscellaneous Depositions: MSS. State Paper Office, and Rolls House.*

hardly have been a secret from Cromwell's spies, if the contents of his letters were undiscovered; and the same jealousy extended also, and not without cause, to the Marquis of Exeter. Lord Exeter, as the grandson of Edward IV., stood next to the Tudor family in the line of succession. The Courtenays were petty sovereigns in Devonshire and Cornwall; and the marquis, though with no special intellectual powers, was regarded as a possible competitor for the crown by a large and increasing party. Lady Exeter we have already seen as a visitor at the shrine of the oracle of Canterbury; and both she and her husband were on terms of the closest intimacy with the Poles. The Poles and the Nevilles, again, were drawing as closely together as mutual intermarriages would allow. Lady Salisbury, I have said, was regarded as the representative at once of the pure Plantagenet blood and of Warwick the King Maker.¹ Lord Montague had married a daughter of Lord Abergavenny; and as any party in the state in opposition to the government was a formidable danger, so a union between Lord Exeter, Lady Salisbury, and the Nevilles was, on all grounds, religious, political, and historical, the most dangerous which could be formed. It was the knowledge of the influence of his family which gave importance to Reginald Pole. It was this which sharpened the eyes of the government to watch for the first buddings of treason among his connections.

Exeter's conduct had been for some time unsatisfactory. He had withdrawn for an unknown cause from his share in the command of the royal army on the Pilgrimage of Grace. He had gone down into Devonshire, where his duty would have been to raise the musters of the county; but, instead of it, he had courted popularity by interrupting the levy of the subsidy.² The judges on circuit at the same time complained of the coercion and undue influence which he exercised in the administration of justice, and of the dread with which his power was regarded by juries. No indictment could take effect against the adherents of the Marquis of Exeter; no dependent of the Courtenays was ever cast in a cause.³

¹ Her blood was thought even purer than Lord Exeter's. A cloud of doubtful illegitimacy darkened all the children of Edward IV.

² "At my lord marquis being in Exeter at the time of the rebellion, he took direction that all commissions for the second subsidy should stay the levy thereof for a time."—Sir Piers Edgecombe to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. x.

³ "The marquis was the man that should help and do them good" (men said). See the experience, how all those do prevail that were towards the marquis. Neither assizes, nisi prius, nor bill of indictment put up

From this and other causes altercations had arisen between Exeter and Cromwell at the council-board. High words had passed on Lord Darcy's arraignment. The marquis had been compelled to sit as high steward; and Lord Delaware, in an account of the trial, stated that when the verdict was given of guilty, a promise had been exacted from Cromwell to save Darcy's life, and even to save his property from confiscation.¹ Cromwell may have done his best, and Darcy's death have been the act of the king. With Henry guilt was ever in proportion to rank; he was never known to pardon a convinced traitor of noble blood. But the responsibility was cast by the peers on the Privy Seal. Once it was even reported that Exeter drew his dagger on the plebeian adventurer, who owed his life to a steel corslet beneath his dress;² and that Cromwell on that occasion ordered the marquis to the Tower. If the story was true, more prudent counsels prevailed, or possibly there would have been an attempt at rescue in the streets.³ The relations between them were evidently approaching a point when one or the other would be crushed. Exeter was boldly confident. When Lord Montague's name was first mentioned with suspicion at the council-board (although, as was discovered afterwards, the marquis knew better than any other person the nature of schemes in which he was himself implicated so deeply), he stood forward in his friend's defence, and offered to be bound for him, body for body.⁴ This was a fresh symptom of his disposition. His conduct, if watched closely, might betray some deeper secrets. About the same time a story reached the government from Cornwall, to which their recent experience in Lincolnshire and the north justified them in attaching the gravest importance.

The parish of St. Kevern had already earned a reputation for turbulence. Here had been born and lived the famous blacksmith Michael Flammock, who forty-five years before had led

against them could take effect; and, of the contrary part, how it prevailed for them."—Sir Thomas Willoughby to Cromwell: *MS. Cotton. Titus, B 1, 386.*

¹ Depositions relating to Lord Delaware: *Rolls House MS. first series, 426.*

² Depositions taken before Sir Henry Capel: *Rolls House MS. first series, 1286.*

³ A man named Howett, one of Exeter's dependents, was heard to say, if the lord marquis had been put to the Tower, at the commandment of the lord privy seal, he should have been fetched out again, though the lord privy seal had said nay to it, and the best in the realm besides; and he the said Howett and his company were fully agreed to have had him out before they had come away."—*MS. ibid.*

⁴ Deposition of Geoffrey Pole: *Rolls House MS.*

the Cornish men to Blackheath; and the inhabitants were still true to their character—a wild, bold race, fit instruments for any enterprise of recklessness. A painter from the neighbourhood came one day to Sir William Godolphin, and told him that he had been desired by one of these St. Kevern men to “make a banner for the said parish, in the which banner they would have, first, the picture of Christ, with his wounds, and a banner in his hand; our Lady on the one side, holding her breasts in her hand, St. John the Baptist on the other; the King’s Grace and the queen¹ kneeling, and all the commonalty kneeling, with scrowls above their heads, making petitions to Christ that they might have their holydays.” The painter said he had asked what they intended to do with such a banner. The man gave him an incoherent account of certain people whom he had seen at Southampton, when he had been up selling fish there, and who had asked him why the Cornish men had not risen when the north rose; and now, he said, they had promised to rise, and were sworn upon the book. They wanted the banner to carry round among the neighbouring parishes, and to raise the people in Christ’s name.² Godolphin would not create an alarm by making sudden arrests; but he despatched a private courier to London, and meanwhile held himself in readiness to crush any mutinous meetings on the instant of their assemblage: “If there be stirring among them,” he said, “by the precious body of God I will rid as many as be about the banner, or else I and a great many will die for it.”³

Conspiracies against Henry VIII. met usually with ill luck. Lord Exeter had traitors among his domestic servants, who had repeatedly warned the council that all was not right, and that he was meditating some secret movement.⁴ At length particular information was given in, which connected itself with the affair at St. Kevern. It was stated distinctly that two Cornish gentlemen named Kendall and Quyntrell had for some time past been secretly employed in engaging men who were to be ready to rise at an hour’s warning. When notice should be given they were to assemble in arms, and declare the Marquis

¹ Jane Seymour was dead, and the king was not remarried: I am unable to explain the introduction of the words, unless (as was perhaps the case) the application to the painter was in the summer of 1537, and he delayed his information till the following year.

² Sir William Godolphin to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xii.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Wriothesley to Sir Thos. Wyatt: *ELLIS*, second series, vol. ii.

of Exeter heir-apparent to the throne. Here was the key to the high promises of Reginald Pole. The government were on the eve of a fresh Pilgrimage of Grace—a fanatical multitude were about to rise again, with a Plantagenet pretender for a leader.

But Henry would not act without clearer proof against a nobleman of so high blood and influence. Cromwell sent orders to Godolphin to secure the man who had ordered the banner.¹ The king despatched two gentlemen of the bedchamber into Cornwall, to make private inquiries, directing them to represent themselves as being merely on a visit to their friends, and to use their opportunities to discover the truth.²

The result of the investigation was an entire confirmation of the story. For several years, even before the divorce of Queen Catherine, a project was found to have been on foot for a movement in favour of Exeter. The object had sometimes varied. Originally the enterprise of Blackheath was to have been renewed under more favourable auspices; and the ambition of Cornwall and Devonshire was to avenge their defeat by dethroning Henry, and giving a new dynasty to England. They would be contented now to set aside the Prince of Wales, and to declare Exeter the next in succession. But the enlistment was as certain as it was dangerous. "Great numbers of the king's subjects" were found to have bound themselves to rise for him.³ We have here, perhaps, the explanation of these counties remaining quiet during the great insurrection. Exeter himself might have been willing (if the assistance of the Emperor was contemplated he must have been willing) to acknowledge the higher claims of the Princess Mary. But his adherents had possessed themselves of larger hopes, and a separate purpose would have embarrassed their movements. This difficulty

¹ Godolphin's Correspondence: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xiii.

² Instructions by the King's Highness to John Becket, Gentleman of his Grace's Chamber, and John Wroth, of the same: printed in the *Archæologia*.

³ "Kendall and Quyntrell were as arrant traitors as any within the realm, leaning to and favouring the advancement of that traitor Henry, Marquis of Exeter, nor letting nor sparing to speak to a great number of the king's subjects in those parts that the said Henry was heir-apparent, and should be king, and would be king, if the King's Highness proceeded to marry the Lady Anne Boleyn, or else it should cost a thousand men's lives. And for their mischievous intent to take effect, they retained divers and a great number of the king's subjects in those parts, to be to the lord marquis in readiness within an hour's warning."—Sir Thomas Willoughby to Cromwell: *MS. Cotton. Titus, B 1*.

existed no longer. Mary could have no claims in preference to Prince Edward; and the fairest hopes of the revolutionists might now be to close the line of the Tudor sovereigns with the life of the reigning king.

The meshes were thus cast fairly over Exeter. He was caught, and in Cromwell's power. But one disclosure led to another. At or near about the same time, some information led to the arrest of a secret agent of the Poles; and the attitude and objects of the whole party were drawn fully into light. The St. Kevern fisherman had mentioned two men at Southampton who had spoken to him on the subject of the new rebellion. Efforts were made to trace these persons; and although the link is missing, and perhaps never existed, between the inquiry and its apparent consequences, a Southampton "yeoman" named Holland was arrested on suspicion of carrying letters between Cardinal Pole and his mother and family. There is no proof that papers of consequence were found in Holland's custody; but the government had the right man in their hands. He was to be taken to London; and, according to the usual mode of conveyance, he was placed on horseback, with his feet tied under his horse's belly. On the road it so happened that he was met and recognised by Sir Geoffrey Pole, Reginald's younger brother. The worthlessness of conspirators is generally proportioned to their violence. Sir Geoffrey, the most deeply implicated of the whole family, except the cardinal, made haste to secure his own safety by the betrayal of the rest. A few words which he exchanged with Holland sufficed to show him that Cromwell was on the true scent. He judged Holland's cowardice by his own; and "he bade him keep on his way, for he would not be long after."¹

Lord Exeter's chances of escape were not yet wholly gone. His treasons were known up to a certain point, but forgiveness might generally be earned by confession and submission; and Cromwell sent his nephew Richard to him, with an entreaty that "he would be frank and plain."² But the accused nobleman would make no revelation which would compromise others. His proud blood perhaps revolted against submission to the detested minister. Perhaps he did not know the extent to which his proceedings had been already discovered, and still

¹ Deposition of Alice Paytchet: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xxxix.

² Examination of Lord Montague and the Marquis of Exeter: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 1262.

less anticipated the treachery by which he was about to be overwhelmed.

Sir Geoffrey Pole made haste to London; and, preventing the accusations which, in a few days, would have overtaken him, he secured the opportunity which had been offered to Exeter of saving himself by confession. He presented himself to the Privy Council, and informed them that he, with Lord Montague, the Marquis and Marchioness of Exeter, Sir Edward Neville, and other persons whom he named, were in treasonable correspondence with his brother Reginald. They had maintained a steady communication with him from the time of his legacy into Flanders. They were watching their opportunities. They had calculated the force which they could raise, the Marquis of Exeter's power in the west forming their especial reliance. The depositions survive only in portions. It does not appear how far the Poles would have supported Exeter's ambition for the crown; they intended, however, this time to avoid Lord Darcy's errors, and not to limit themselves to attacks upon the ministers.¹ The death of Lord Abergavenny had been inopportune; ² but his brother, Sir Edward Neville, with Lady Salisbury, would supply his place in rallying the Neville powers. The Yorkshire rising had proved how large was the material of an insurrection if adequately managed; and the whole family, doubtless, shared with Reginald, or rather, to them Reginald himself owed the conviction which he urged so repeatedly on the Emperor and the Pope, that, on the first fair opportunity, a power could be raised which the government would be unable to cope with.

If it is remembered that these discoveries occurred when the Bull of Deposition was on the point of publication—when the "Liber de Unitate" was passing into print—when the pacification of Nice had restored the Continent to the condition most dangerous to England—when the Pope was known to be preparing again a mighty effort to gather against Henry the whole force of Christendom, this was not a time, it will be understood easily, when such plottings would be dealt with leniently by a weaker hand than that which then ruled the destinies of England.

Exeter, Montague, and Neville were sent to the Tower on the 3rd and 4th of November. Lady Exeter followed with her attendant, Constance Beverley, who had been her companion

¹ "The Lord Darcy played the fool," Montague said; "he went about to pluck the council. He should first have begun with the head. But I beshrew him for leaving off so soon."—*Baga de Secretis*, pouch xi. bundle 2.

² "I am sorry the Lord Abergavenny is dead; for if he were alive, he were able to make ten thousand men."—Sayings of Lord Montague: *Ibid.*

on her secret pilgrimage to the Nun. It is possible that Sir Geoffrey's revelations were made by degrees; for the king was so unwilling to prosecute, that ten days passed before their trial was determined on.¹ Lady Salisbury was not arrested; but Lord Southampton went down to Warblington, her residence in Hampshire, to examine her. She received his questions with a fierce denial of all knowledge of the matters to which they referred, and, for a time, he scarcely knew whether to think her innocent or guilty. "Surely," he said, in giving an account of his interview, "there hath not been seen or heard of a woman so earnest, so manlike in countenance, so fierce as well in gesture as in words; either her sons have not made her privy to the bottom and pit of their stomachs, or she is the most arrant traitress that ever lived."² But her rooms were searched; letters, Papal bulls, and other matters were discovered, which left no doubt of her general tendencies, if they were insufficient to implicate her in actual guilt; and one letter, or copy of a letter, unsigned, but, as Southampton said, undoubtedly hers, and addressed to Lord Montague, was found, the matter of which compromised her more deeply. She was again interrogated, and this time important admissions were extracted from her; but she carried herself with undaunted haughtiness. "We have dealt with such an one," the earl said, "as men have not dealt with tofore; we may rather call her a strong and constant man than a woman."³ No decisive conclusions could be formed against her; but it was thought well that she should remain under surveillance; and, three days later, she was removed to Cowdray, a place belonging to Southampton himself, where she was detained in honourable confinement.

The general case meanwhile continued to enlarge. The surviving materials are too fragmentary to clear the whole circumstances; but allusions to witnesses by name whose depositions

¹ "On Monday, the fourth of this month, the Marquis of Exeter and Lord Montague were committed to the Tower of London, being the King's Majesty so grievously touched by them, that albeit that his Grace hath upon his special favour borne towards them passed over many accusations made against the same of late by their own domestics, thinking with his clemency to conquer their cankeredness, yet his Grace was constrained, for avoiding of such malice as was prepensed, both against his person royal and the surety of my Lord Prince, to use the remedy of committing them to ward. The accusations made against them be of great importance, and duly proved by substantial witnesses. And yet the King's Majesty loveth them so well, and of his great goodness is so loath to proceed against them, that it is doubted what his Highness will do towards them."—Wriothesley to Sir T. Wyatt: *ELLIS*, second series, vol. ii.

² Southampton to Cromwell: *ELLIS*, second series, vol. ii. p. 110.

³ *Ibid.* p. 114.

have not been preserved, show how considerable those materials were. The world at least were satisfied of the guilt of the chief prisoners. "They would have made as foul a work," says a letter written from London on the 21st of November, "as ever was in England."¹ Henry made up his mind that they should be proceeded against. Treason at home was too palpably connected with conspiracies against England abroad; and the country could not risk a repetition of the Pilgrimage of Grace.

While preparations were made for the trials, the king took the opportunity of issuing a calming circular to the justices of the peace. The clergy, as before, had been the first to catch the infection of disorder: they had been again eager propagators of sedition, and had spread extravagant stories of the intentions of the government against the Church. Emboldened by the gentleness with which the late insurgents had been handled, "these miserable and Papistical superstitious wretches," the king said, "not caring what danger and mischief our people should incur, have raised the said old rumours, and forged new seditious tales, intending as much as in them lyeth a new commotion. Wherefore, for the universal danger to you and to all our good subjects, and trouble that might ensue unless good and earnest provision to repress them be taken thereupon, we desire and pray you that within the precincts of your charges ye shall endeavour yourselves to enquire and find out all such cankered parsons, vicars, and curates as bid the parishioners do as they did in times past, to live as their fathers, and that the old fashions is best. And also with your most effectual vigilance try out such seditious tale tellers, spreaders of brutes, tidings, and rumours, touching us in honour and surety, or [touching] any mutation of the laws and customs of the realm, or any other thing which might cause sedition."²

And now once more the peers were assembled in Westminster Hall, to try two fresh members of their order, two of the noblest born among them, for high treason; and again the judges sate with them to despatch the lower offenders. On the 2nd and 3rd of December Lord Montague and Lord Exeter were arraigned successively. On the part of the crown it was set forth generally that "the king was supreme head on earth of the Church of England, and that his progenitors, from times whereof there was no memory to the contrary, had also been supreme heads of the Church of England; which authority and power of the

¹ Robert Warren to Lord Fitzwaters: *MS. Cotton. Titus, B 1, 143.*

² BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 494, etc.

said king, Paul the Third, Pope of Rome, the public enemy of the king and kingdom, without any right or title, arrogantly and obstinately challenged and claimed; and that one Reginald Pole, late of London, Esq^r., otherwise Reginald Pole, late Dean of Exeter, with certain others of the king's subjects, had personally repaired to the said Pope of Rome, knowing him to be the king's enemy, and adhered to and became liege man of the said Pope, and falsely and unnaturally renounced the king, his natural liege lord; that Reginald Pole accepted the dignity of a cardinal of the court of Rome without the king's license, in false and treasonable despite and contempt of the king, and had continued to live in parts beyond the seas, and was there vagrant, and denying the king to be upon earth supreme head of the Church of England."

Caring only to bring the prisoners within the letter of the act, the prosecution made no allusion to Exeter's proceedings in Cornwall. It was enough to identify his guilt with the guilt of the great criminal. Against him, therefore, it was objected—

"That, as a false traitor, machinating the death of the king, and to excite his subjects to rebellion, and seeking to maintain the said Cardinal Pole in his intentions, the Marquis of Exeter did say to Geoffrey Pole the following words in English: 'I like well the proceedings of the Cardinal Pole; but I like not the proceedings of this realm; and I trust to see a change of this world.'

"Furthermore, that the Marquis of Exeter, machinating with Lord Montague the death and destruction of the king, did openly declare to the Lord Montague, 'I trust once to have a fair day upon those knaves which rule about the king; and I trust to see a merry world one day.'

"And, furthermore persevering in his malicious intention, he did say, 'Knaves rule about the king;' and then stretching his arm, and shaking his clenched fist, spoke the following words: 'I trust to give them a buffet one day.'"

Sir Geoffrey Pole was in all cases the witness. The words were proved. It was enough. A verdict of guilty was returned; and the marquis was sentenced to die.

If the proof of language of no darker complexion was sufficient to secure a condemnation, the charges against Lord Montague left him no shadow of a hope. Montague had expressed freely to his miserable brother his approbation of Reginald's proceedings. He had discussed the chances of the impending struggle and the resources of which they could

dispose. He had spoken bitterly of the king; he had expressed a fear that when the world "came to strypes," as come it would, "there would be a lack of honest men," with other such language, plainly indicative of his disposition. However justly, indeed, we may now accuse the equity which placed men on their trial for treason for impatient expressions, there can be no uncertainty that, in the event of an invasion, or of a rebellion with any promise of success in it, both Montague and Exeter would have thrown their weight into the rebel scale. Montague, too, was condemned.

The date of the expressions which were sworn against them is curious. They belong, without exception, to the time when Reginald Pole was in Flanders. That there was nothing later was accounted for by the distrust which Geoffrey said that soon after they had begun to entertain towards him. Evidently they had seen his worthlessness; and as their enterprise had become more critical, they had grown more circumspect. But he remembered enough to destroy them, and to save by his baseness his own miserable life.

He was himself tried, though to receive a pardon after conviction. With Sir Edward Neville and four other persons he was placed at the bar on charges of the same kind as those against Exeter and his brother. Neville had said that he "would have a day upon the knaves that were about the king;" "that the king was a beast, and worse than a beast;" "machinating and conspiring to extinguish the love and affection of the king's subjects." Sir Geoffrey Pole, beyond comparison the most guilty, had been in command of a company under the Duke of Norfolk at Doncaster; and was proved to have avowed an intention of deserting in the action, if an action was fought—real, bad, black treason. Of the others, two had spoken against the supremacy; one had carried letters to the cardinal; another had said to Lord Montague, that "the king would hang in hell for the plucking down of abbeys."

The last case was the hardest. Sir Nicholas Carew, Master of the Horse, had been on the commission which had taken the indictments against Exeter, and had said "that he marvelled it was so secretly handled; that the like was never seen." The expression brought him under suspicion. He was found to have been intimate with Exeter; to have received letters from him of traitorous import, which he had concealed and burnt. With the rest he was brought in guilty, and received sentence as a traitor. On the 9th of December the Marquis of Exeter,

Montague, and Sir Edward Neville were beheaded on Tower Hill.¹ On the 16th the following proclamation was issued:—

"Be it known unto all men, that whereas Henry Courtenay, late Marquis of Exeter, knight companion of the most noble order of the Garter, hath lately committed and done high treason against the king our dread sovereign lord, sovereign of the said most noble order of the Garter, compassing and imagining the destruction of his most royal person in the most traitorous and rebellious wise, contrary to his oath, duty, and allegiance, intending thereby, if he might have obtained his purpose, to have subverted the whole good order of the commonwealth of England, for the which high and most detestable treason the said Henry hath deserved to be degraded of the said most noble order, and expelled out of the same company, and is not worthy that his arms, ensigns, and hatchments should remain amongst the virtuous and approved knights of the said most noble order, nor to have any benefit thereof,—the right wise king and supreme head of the most noble order, with the whole consent and counsel of the same, wills and commands that his arms, which he nothing deserveth, be taken away and thrown down, and he be clean put from this order, and never from henceforth to be taken of any of the number thereof; so that all others by his example, from henceforth for evermore, may beware how they commit or do the like crime or fault, unto like shame or rebuke.

"God save the King."²

"December 16, 1538."

Executions for high treason bear necessarily a character of cruelty, when the peril which the conspiracies create has passed away. In the sense of our own security we lose the power of understanding the magnitude or even the meaning of the danger. But that there had been no unnecessary alarm, that these noblemen were in no sense victims of tyranny, but had

¹ Hall, followed by the chroniclers, says that the executions were on the 9th of January; but he was mistaken. In a MS. in the State Paper Office, dated the 16th of December, 1538, Exeter is described as having suffered on the 9th of the same month. My account of these trials is taken from the records in the *Baga de Secretis*; from the Act of Attainder, 31 Henry VIII. cap. 15, not printed in the Statute Book, but extant on the Roll; and from a number of scattered depositions, questions, and examinations in the Rolls House and in the State Paper Office.

² The degrading of Henry Courtenay, late Marquis of Exeter, the 3rd day of December, and the same day convicted; and the 9th day of the said month beheaded at Tower Hill; and the 16th day of the same month degraded at Windsor: *MS. State Paper Office*. Unarranged bundle.

been cut off by a compelled severity, may be seen in the consequence of their deaths. Unjust sentences provoke indignation. Indignation in stormy times finds the means, sooner or later, of shaping itself into punishment. But the undercurrent of disaffection, which for ten years had penetrated through English life, was now exhausted, and gradually ceased to flow. The enemy had been held down; it acknowledged its master; and, with the exception of one unimportant commotion in Yorkshire, no symptom of this particular form of peril was again visible, until the king had received notice of departure, in his last illness, and the prospect of his death warmed the hopes of confusion into life again. The prompt extinction of domestic treason, in all likelihood, was the cause which really saved the country from a visit from the Emperor. "Laud be to God," said an Englishman, "we are all now united and knit with a firm love in our hearts towards our prince. Ye never read nor heard that ever England was overcome by outward realms, nor dare any outward prince enterprise to come hither, except they should trust of help within the realm, which I trust in God none such shall ever be found."¹ The speaker expressed the exact truth; and no one was more keenly aware of it than Charles V.

We must once more go back over our steps. The Emperor being on good terms with France, England, obedient to the necessity of its position, again held out its hand to Germany. No sooner had the pacification of Nice been completed, and Henry had found that he was not, after all, to be admitted as a party contrahent, than, without quarrelling with Charles, he turned his position by immediate advances to the Smalcaldic League. In the summer of 1538 Lutheran divines were invited to England to discuss the terms of their confession with the bishops; and though unsuccessful in the immediate object of finding terms of communion, they did not return, without having established, as it seemed, a generally cordial relationship with the English Reformers. Purgatory, episcopal ordination, the marriage of the clergy, were the comparatively unimportant points of difference. On the vital doctrine of the real presence the Lutherans were as jealously sensitive as the vast majority of the English; and on the points on which they continued orthodox the Reformers, German and English, united in a bigotry almost equal to that of Rome. On the departure of the theological embassy, the Landgrave of Hesse took the opportunity of addressing a letter of warning to Henry on the progress

¹ Examination of Christopher Chator: *Rolls House MS. first series.*

of heresy in England, and expressing his anxiety that the king should not forget his duty in repressing and extirpating so dangerous a disorder.¹

His advice found Cranmer and Cromwell as anxious as himself. The Catholics at home and abroad persisted more and more loudly in identifying a separation from Rome with heresy. The presence of these very Germans had given opportunity, however

¹ Gibbon professes himself especially scandalised at the persecution of Servetus by men who themselves had stood in so deep need of toleration. The scandal is scarcely reasonable, for neither Calvin nor any other Reformer of the sixteenth century desired a "liberty of conscience" in its modern sense. The Council of Geneva, the General Assembly at Edinburgh, the Smalcaldic League, the English Parliament, and the Spanish Inquisition held the same opinions on the wickedness of heresy; they differed only in the definition of the crime. The English and Scotch Protestants have been taunted with persecution. When nations can grow to maturity in a single generation, when the child can rise from his first grammar lesson a matured philosopher, individual men may clear themselves by a single effort from mistakes which are embedded in the heart of their age. Let us listen to the Landgrave of Hesse. He will teach us that Henry VIII. was no exceptional persecutor.

The Landgrave has heard that the errors of the Anabaptists are increasing in England. He depicts in warring colours the insurrection at Münster: "If they grow to any multitude," he says, "their acts will surely declare their seditious minds and opinions. Surely this is true, the devil, which is an homicide, carrieth men that are entangled in false opinions to unlawful slaughters and the breach of society. . . . There are no rulers in Germany," he continues, "whether they be Popish or professors of the doctrines of the Gospel, that do suffer these men, if they come into their hands. All men punish them grievously. We use a just moderation, which God requireth of all good rulers. Whereas any of the sect is apprehended, we call together divers learned men and good preachers, and command them, the errors being confuted by the Word of God, to teach them rightlier, to heal them that be sick, to deliver them that were bound; and by this way many that are astray are come home again. These are not punished with any corporal pains, but are driven openly to forsake their errors. If any do stubbornly defend the ungodly and wicked errors of that sect, yielding nothing to such as can and do teach them truly, these are kept a good space in prison, and sometimes sore punished there; yet in such sort are they handled, that death is long deferred for hope of amendment; and, as long as any hope is, favour is shewed to life. If there be no hope left, then the obstinate are put to death." Warning Henry of the snares of the devil, who labours continually to discredit the truth by grafting upon it heresy, he concludes:—

"Wherefore, if that sect hath done any hurt there in your Grace's realm, we doubt not but your princely wisdom will so temper the matter, that both dangers be avoided, errors be kept down, and yet a difference had between those that are good men, and mislike the abuses of the Bishop of Rome's baggages, and those that be Anabaptists. In many parts of Germany where the Gospel is not preached, cruelty is exercised upon both sorts without discretion. The magistrates which obey the Bishop of Rome (whereas severity is to be used against the Anabaptists) slay good men utterly alien from their opinions. But your Majesty will put a difference great enough between these two sorts, and serve Christ's glory on the one side, and save the innocent blood on the other."—Landgrave of Hesse to Henry VIII. September 25, 1538: *State Papers*, vol. viii.

absurdly, for scandal; and, taken in connection with the destruction of the shrines, was made a pretext for charging the king with a leaning towards doctrines with which he was most anxious to disavow a connection.¹ The political clouds which were gathering abroad, added equally to the anxiety, both of the king and his ministers, to stand clear in this matter; and as Cromwell had recommended, after the Pilgrimage of Grace, that the Articles of Unity should be enforced against some offender or offenders in a signal manner—so, to give force to his principles, which had been faintly acted upon, either he, or the party to which he belonged, now chose out for prosecution a conspicuous member of the Christian brotherhood, John Lambert, who was marked with the dreadful reputation of a sacramentary. Dr. Barnes volunteered as the accuser. Barnes, it will be remembered, had been himself imprisoned for heresy, and had done penance in St. Paul's. He was a noisy, vain man, Lutheran in his views, and notorious for his hatred of more advanced Protestants. Tyndal had warned the brethren against him several years previously; but his German sympathies had recommended him to the vicegerent; he had been employed on foreign missions, and was for the time undergoing the temptation of a brief prosperity. Lambert, the intended victim, had been a friend at Cambridge of Bilney the martyr; a companion at Antwerp of Tyndal and Frith; and had perhaps taken a share in the translation of the Bible. Subsequently, he had been in trouble for suspicion of heresy; he had been under examination before Warham, and afterwards Sir Thomas More; and having been left in prison by the latter, he had been set at liberty by Cranmer. He was now arrested on the charge preferred by Dr. Barnes, of having denied the real presence, contrary to the Articles of Faith. He was tried in the archbishop's court; and, being condemned, he appealed to the king.

Henry decided that he would hear the cause in person. A few years before, a sacramentary was despatched with the same swift indifference as an ordinary felon: a few years later, a sacramentary had ceased to be a criminal. In the interval, the proportions of the crime had so dilated in apparent magnitude, that a trial for it was a national event—an affair of vast public moment.

¹ "They have made a wondrous matter and report here of the shrines and of burning of the idol at Canterbury; and, besides that, the King's Highness and council be become sacramentarians by reason of this embassy which the King of Saxony sent late into England."—Theobald to Cromwell, from Padua, October 22, 1538: ELLIS, third series, vol. iii.

On the 16th of November, while London was ringing with the arrest of the Marquis of Exeter, the court was opened in Westminster Hall. In the grey twilight of the late dawn, the whole peerage of England, lay and spiritual, took their seats, to the right and left of the throne. The twelve judges placed themselves on raised benches at the back. The prisoner was brought in; and soon after the king entered, "clothed all in white," with the yeomen of the guard.

The Bishop of Carlisle rose first to open the case. The king, he said, had put down the usurpations of the Bishop of Rome, but it was not to be thought, therefore, that he intended to give licence to heresy. They were not met, at present, to discuss doctrines, but to try a person accused of a crime, by the laws of the Church and of the country.

Lambert was then ordered to stand forward.

"What is your name?" the king asked. "My name is Nicholson," he said, "though I be called Lambert." "What!" the king said, "have you two names? I would not trust you, having two names, though you were my brother."

The persecutions of the bishops, Lambert answered, had obliged him to disguise himself; but now God had inspired the king's mind, enduing him with wisdom and understanding to stay their cruelty.

"I come not here," said Henry, "to hear mine own praises painted out in my presence. Go to the matter without more circumstance. Answer as touching the sacrament of the altar, is it the body of Christ or no?"

"I answer with St. Augustine," the prisoner said; "it is the body of Christ after a certain manner."

"Answer me not out of St. Augustine," said the king; "tell me plainly whether it be He."

"Then I say it is not," was the answer.

"Mark well," the king replied, "you are condemned by Christ's own words—'*Hoc est corpus meum.*'" He turned to Cranmer, and told him to convince the prisoner of his error.

The argument began in the morning. First Cranmer, and after him nine other bishops laboured out their learned reasons—reasons which, for fifteen hundred years, had satisfied the whole Christian world, yet had suddenly ceased to be of cogency. The torches were lighted before the last prelate had ceased to speak. Then once more the king asked Lambert for his opinion. "After all these labours taken with you, are you yet satisfied?" he said. "Choose, will you live or will you die!"

"I submit myself to the will of your Majesty," Lambert said.

"Commit your soul to God," replied Henry, "not to me."

"I commit my soul to God," he said, "and my body to your clemency."

"Then you must die," the king said. "I will be no patron of heretics."

It was over. The appeal was rejected. Cromwell read the sentence. Four days' interval was allowed before the execution. In a country which was governed by law, not by the special will of a despot, the supreme magistrate was neither able, nor desired, so long as a law remained unrepealed by parliament, to suspend the action of it.

The morning on which Lambert suffered he was taken to Cromwell's house, where he breakfasted simply in the hall; and afterwards he died at Smithfield, crying with his last breath, "None but Christ—none but Christ."¹ Foxe relates, as a rumour, that Cromwell, before Lambert suffered, begged his forgiveness. A more accurate account of Cromwell's feelings is furnished by himself in a letter written a few days later to Sir Thomas Wyatt:—

"The sixteenth of this present month, the King's Majesty, for the reverence of the holy sacrament of the altar, did sit openly in his hall, and there presided at the disputation, process, and judgment of a miserable heretic sacramentary, who was burnt the twentieth of the same month. It was a wonder to see how princely, with how excellent gravity, and inestimable majesty, his Majesty exercised the very office of a superior head of his Church of England; how benignly his Grace essayed to convert the miserable man; how strong and manifest reason his Highness alleged against him. I wished the princes of Christendom to have seen it; undoubtedly they should have much marvelled at his Majesty's most high wisdom and judgment, and reputed him none otherwise after the same than in manner the mirrour and light of all other kings and princes in Christendom. The same was done openly, with great solemnity."²

The circumstances which accompanied Pole's mission into Spain, and those which occasioned the catastrophe of the marriage treaties, can now be understood. The whole secret of the Emperor's intentions it is not easy, perhaps it is not necessary, to comprehend; but, as it was not till late in the spring that the threatening symptoms finally cleared, so it is impos-

¹ The history of Lambert's trial is taken from Foxe, vol. v.

² Cromwell to Wyatt: Norr's *Wyatt*, p. 326.

sible to doubt that an enterprise against England was seriously meditated, and was relinquished only when the paralysis of the domestic factions who were to have risen in its support could no longer be mistaken.

The official language of the Spanish court through the winter "had waxed from colder to coldest."¹ On Pole's arrival in the Peninsula, Sir Thomas Wyatt, by the king's instructions, protested against his reception. The Emperor, who in 1537 had forbidden his entrance into his dominions when on a similar errand, replied now that, "if he was his own traitor, he could not refuse him audience, coming as a legate from the Holy Father." The next step was the arrest of the English ships in Flanders, and the recall of the Spanish ambassador; and meanwhile a mysterious fleet was collected at Antwerp and in other ports, every one asking with what object, and no one being able to answer, unless it were for a descent on Ireland or England.² Mendoza's departure from London was followed immediately after by the withdrawal of M. de Chatillon, the ambassador of France. "It is in every man's mouth," reported Wriothesley, "that we shall have war. It has been told me that the commission that was sent hither for our matters³ was dispatched only to keep us in hopes, and to the intent that we might be taken tardy and without provision."⁴

Wriothesley's duty required him to learn the meaning of the arrests. The ministers at Brussels affected to say that the Emperor required sailors for his fleet, and, until it had sailed on its mysterious errand, no other vessels could leave the harbours. The ambassador refused to accept a reply so insolent and unsatisfactory; he insisted on an interview with the regent herself, and pointing to the clause in the commercial treaty between England and Flanders which stipulated, on behalf of the ships of both nations, for free egress and ingress, he required an explanation of the infringement. "You give us fair words," he said to her, "but your deeds being contrary, the King's Majesty my master shall join words and deeds together, and see that all

¹ Cromwell to Wriothesley: *State Papers*, vol. viii. p. 155.

² Christopher Mount writes: "This day (March 5) the Earl William a Furstenburg was at dinner with the Duke of Saxe, which asked of him what news. He answered that there is labour made for truce between the Emperor and the Turk. Then said the duke, to what purpose should be all these preparations the Emperor maketh? The earl answered, that other men should care for. Then said the duke, the bruit is here—it should be against the King of England. Then said the earl, the King of England shall need to take heed to himself."—*State Papers*, vol. i. p. 606.

³ The negotiations for the marriages.

⁴ Wriothesley to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. viii. p. 165.

is but finesse. If you had declared open war, by the law of nations merchant ships should have six weeks allowed them to depart;" while peace remained, they might not be detained a day. The queen regent, like her council, gave an evasive answer. The Emperor must be served, she said; the fleet would soon sail, and the ships would be free. She tried to leave him; his anxiety got the better of his courtesy; he placed himself between her and the door, and entreated some better explanation. But he could obtain nothing. She insisted on passing, and he found himself referred back to the council. Here he was informed that she could not act otherwise; she was obeying absolute orders from the Emperor. Wriothsesley warned them that the king would not bear it, that he would make reprisals, and "then should begin a broiling." It was no matter; they seemed indifferent.

From their manner Wriothsesley did not believe that they would begin a war; yet he could feel no security. "I have heard," he wrote to Cromwell, "that the French king, the Bishop of Rome, and the King of Scots be in league to invade us this summer: and how the Emperor will send to their aid certain Spaniards which shall arrive in Scotland; which Spaniards shall, as it were in fury, upon the arrival in Spain of the ships here prepared, enter the same, half against the Emperor's will, with the oath never to return till they shall revenge the matter of the dowager." "This," he added, "I take for no gospel, howbeit our master is daily slandered and villanously spoken against. It is possible that all shall be well; but in the mean season, I pray to God to put in the King's Majesty's mind rather to spend twenty thousand pounds in vain, to be in perfect readiness, than to wish it had so been done if any malicious person would attempt anything. Weapons biddeth peace; and good preparation maketh men to look or they leap. The Emperor hath made great provision. It may yet be that he will do somewhat against the Turks; but as many think nay, as otherwise. But he maketh not his preparation in vain. England is made but a morsel among these choppers. They would have the Duke of Orleans a king;¹ and the Duke of Guise, they say, will visit his daughter in Scotland. It is not unlike that somewhat may be attempted; which, nevertheless, may be defeated. God hath taken the King's Majesty into his own tuition."²

¹ i.e., he was to marry the Princess Mary.

Wriothsesley to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. viii. p. 167.

Each day the news from Flanders became more alarming. The wharves at Antwerp were covered with ammunition and military stores. Contributions had been levied on the clergy, who had been taught to believe that the money was to be spent in the Pope's quarrel against the King of England. On the 24th of March two hundred and seventy sail were reported as ready for sea; and the general belief was that, if no attack were ventured, the preparations to meet it, which Henry was known to have made, would be the sole cause of the hesitation.¹ Information of a precisely similar kind was furnished from Spain. The agent of a London house wrote to his master: "You shall understand that, four days past, we had news how the Bishop of Rome had sent a post to the Emperor, which came in seven days from Rome, and brought letters requiring and desiring his Majesty, jointly with the French king and the King of Scots, to give war against the king our sovereign lord; and all his subjects to be heretics and schismatics, and wherever they could win and take any of our nation by land or sea, to take us for Jews or infidels, and to use our persons as slaves. We have hope that in this the Emperor will not grant the request of his Holiness, being so much against charity, notwithstanding that divers our friends in this country give us secret monition to put good order for the safeguard of our goods; and they think, verily, the Emperor will have war with the king our master this March next, and that the army of men and ships in Flanders shall go against England."²

The thing to be feared, if there was cause for fear, was a sudden treacherous surprise. The point of attack would probably be the open coast of Kent. An army would be landed on the beach somewhere between Sandwich and Dover, and would march on London. Leaving Cromwell to see to the defence of the metropolis, Henry went down in person to examine

¹ "Within these fourteen days, it shall surely break out what they do purpose to do; as of three ways, one—Gueldres, Denmark, or England; notwithstanding, as I think, England is without danger, because they know well that the King's Grace hath prepared to receive them if they come. There be in Holland 270 good ships prepared; but whither they shall go no man can tell. Preparations of all manner of artillery doth daily go through Antwerp.

"All the spirituality here be set for to pay an innumerable sum of money. Notwithstanding, they will be very well content with giving the aforesaid money, if all things may be so brought to pass as they hope it shall, and as it is promised them—and that is, that the Pope's quarrel may be avenged upon the King's Grace of England."—March 14, — to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xvi.

² William Ostrich to the worshipful Richard Ebbes, Merchant in London: *MS. State Paper Office*, first series, vol. ii.

his new fortresses, and to speak a few words of encouragement to the garrisons. The merchant-ships in the Thames were taken up by the government and armed. Lord Southampton took command of the fleet at Portsmouth; Lord Russell was sent into the west; Lord Surrey into Norfolk. The beacons were fresh trimmed; the musters through the country were ordered to be in readiness. Sir Ralph Sadler, the king's private secretary, sent from Dover to desire Cromwell to lose no time in setting London in order: "Use your diligence," he wrote, "for his Grace said that *diligence passe sense*; willing me to write that French proverb unto your lordship, the rather to quicken you in that behalf. Surely his Majesty mindeth nothing more than, like a courageous prince of valiant heart, to prepare and be in readiness, in all events, to encounter the malice of his enemies; in which part, no doubt, Almighty God will be his helper, and all good subjects will employ themselves to the uttermost, both lives and goods, to serve his Highness truly. . . . All that will the contrary, God send them ill-hap and short life."¹

¹ Sir Ralph Sadler to Cromwell, from Dover, March 16: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xxxvii. Marillac, who came to England as ambassador from France in March, describes to the Constable the preparations to resist invasion:—

"The King, my lord, is in marvellous distrust as well of the King our master, as of the Emperor. He is confident that they intend to declare war against him; and he is therefore taking measures with the utmost haste for the defence of the realm. He foresees that if attacked at all, he will be attacked in force, and he is calling under arms the whole strength of the realm. As I passed through Dover I saw new ramparts and bulwarks on the rocks that face the sea. They had all been made since the return of M. de Chastillon, and were well furnished with artillery, large and small. No landing at Dover could be attempted now with a prospect of success.

"In Canterbury, and the other towns upon the road, I found every English subject in arms who was capable of serving. Boys of seventeen or eighteen have been called out, without exemption of place or person. The inhabitants of London are formed into a corps by themselves for the protection of the City. French subjects residing here for trade have not been spared; they too have been required to serve, whether they desire it or no. Some have answered bravely that they would not bear arms against their natural Sovereign. Others, taken unawares, have yielded through timidity.

"On the road I met a body of men. I was told there were six thousand of them, going as a garrison to Sandwich. As I approached the City I saw the King's ships and galleys all armed and ready to sail. A multitude of private vessels were fitting at their side with all speed; and when this flotilla goes to sea, and unites with the five-and-twenty or thirty ships at Portsmouth, the whole force will amount to a hundred and fifty sail.

"Merchants' traffic outward or inward is interdicted. Every vessel is under arrest, and no one is allowed to leave the realm. English subjects abroad have received orders to return, and are most of them by this time at home. Artillery and ammunition pass out incessantly from the Tower, and are dispatched to all points on the coast where a landing is likely to be

The inspection proving satisfactory, Sir Thomas Cheyne was left at Dover Castle, with command of the coast from the mouth of the Thames westward. We catch sight through March and April of soldiers gathering and moving. Look-out vessels hung about the Channel, watching the Flanders ports. One morning when the darkness lifted, sixty strange sail were found at anchor in the Downs;¹ and swiftly two thousand men were in arms upon the sandflats towards Deal. Cheyne never took off his clothes for a fortnight. Strong easterly gales were blowing, which would bring the fleet across in a few hours. "Mr. Fletcher of Rye," in a boat of his own construction, "which he said had no fellow in England," beat up in the wind's eye to Dover, "of his own mind, to serve the King's Majesty." At daybreak he would be off to Gravelines, on the look-out; at noon he would be in the new harbour, with reports to the English commander. Day after day the huge armada lay motionless. At length sure word was brought that an order had been sent out for every captain, horseman, and footman to be on board on the last of March.² In a few days the truth, whatever it

attempted. In short, my lord, they have made such progress that an invading force will not find them unprovided. They are prepared on all sides to the very extent of their ability, and the great lords are at their posts as if the enemy were already at their doors.

"The cause of the excitement, my lord, is a conviction on the part of their King that the Emperor, the Pope, and our master, are in a league to destroy him and his realm. The King told me himself that he knew from the best authority that the Most Christian King was concerting measures with the Emperor to fall upon him. Your secretary, my lord, he said, was waiting in Spain to bring you the Emperor's latest instructions. M. de Chastillon's sudden departure gave a show of reason to the alarm.

"The Emperor's ambassador demanded his passports directly after, and went away without speaking of a successor; and where before there was little doubt that mischief was meant, the uncertainty was then at an end. They looked for nothing but immediate hostilities.

"At this moment there is especial agitation on account of the appearance of sixty sail of Flemings, said to be on their way to Spain for the expedition to Algiers. People here do not believe that Algiers is their real destination. They are vessels of large burden, unsuited to the Levant, and the impression is that they are transports. Fifty or sixty more have been discovered by scouts in the harbours of Zealand, and report says that they have ten thousand men on board them.

"These things have placed the King upon his mettle. He has sent troops northward, for he looks to be invaded over the Scottish Border. But his preparations are defensive merely, not aggressive. He will never choose such a time as the present to meddle with his neighbours of his own will, or to seize and fortify any second Calais on the French coast. As matters stand, his great anxiety is to be on friendly terms with our master, for never was our master's friendship of more importance to him."

¹ Hollinshed, Stow.

² Letters of Sir Thomas Cheyne to Cromwell, March and April, 1539: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series.

was, would be known. The easterly winds were the chief cause of anxiety. If England was their object, they would come so quickly, Cheyne said, that although watch was kept night and day all along the coast, yet, "if evil were, the best would be a short warning for any number of men to repulse them at their landing." However, his information led him to think the venture would not be made.

He was right. A few days later the look-out boats brought the welcome news that the fleet had broken up. Part withdrew to the ports of Zealand, where the stores and cannon were re-landed, and the vessels dismasted. Part were seen bearing down Channel before the wind, bound for Spain and the Mediterranean; and Cromwell, who had had an ague fit from anxiety, informed the king on the 19th of April that he had received private letters from Antwerp, telling him that the enterprise had been relinquished from the uncertainty which appeared of success.¹

Such, in fact, was the truth. The Emperor, longing, and yet fearing to invade, and prepared to make the attempt if he could be satisfied of a promising insurrection in his support, saw in the swift and easy extinction of the Marquis of Exeter's conspiracy an evidence of Henry's strength which Pole's eloquence could not gainsay. He had waited, uncertain perhaps, till time had proved the consequences of the execution; and when he found that the country was in arms, but only to oppose the invaders whom the English legate had promised it would welcome as deliverers, he was too wise to risk an over-

¹ Cromwell to the King: *MS. Cotton. Titus. B 1, 271*. On the 15th April Marillac wrote:—

Marillac to the Constable

"April 15, 1539.

"MY LORD,—They are mustering, drilling and fortifying their exposed frontiers in all directions. They think of nothing else. The Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, with the other great lords, are away in their counties, providing for the public safety. My lord, no invading force could show itself without the whole nation being warned, and every man will be ready to march wherever danger threatens. Most of the ships have already sailed. Those which remain are chiefly the property of private persons, English or foreign, but there are very few of them which are not in fighting order. Lord Cromwell has ten thousand men twenty-five miles off; and next Friday, St. George's Day, will be the review in London. There will be from fifty to sixty thousand men, perhaps, for not a man who can bear arms is excused. The foreigners resident have received orders to provide weapons and to appear in the City livery. Indeed, my lord, they are thoroughly prepared; and on the sea, although they have now but a hundred or a hundred and twenty ships, they say they will shortly have a hundred and fifty. Considering the time they have been at work, they have not done badly."—*MS. Bibliot. Impér. Paris*.

throw which would have broken his power in Germany, and ensured the enduring enmity of England. The time, he told the Pope, did not serve; and to a second more anxious message he replied that he could not afford to quarrel with Henry till Germany was in better order. The King of France might act as he pleased. He would not interfere with him. For himself, when the German difficulty was once settled, he would then take up arms and avenge the Pope's injuries and his own.¹ Once more Pole had failed. He has been accused of personal ambition; but the foolish expectations of his admirers in Europe have been perhaps mistaken for his own.² His worst crime was his vanity; his worst misfortune was his talent—a talent for discovering specious reasons for choosing the wrong side. The deliberate frenzy of his conduct shows the working of a mind not wholly master of itself; or, if we leave him the responsibility of his crimes, he may be allowed the imperfect pity which attaches to failure. The results of his labours to destroy the Reformation had, so far, been to bring his best friends and Lord Montague to the scaffold. His mother, entangled in his guilt, lay open to the same fate. His younger brother was a perjured traitor and a fratricide. In bitter misery he now shrank into the monastery of Carpentras, where, if he might be allowed, he wrote to Contarini, that he would hide his face for ever in mourning and prayer. Often, he said, he had heard the King of England speak of his mother as the most saintly woman in Christendom. First priests, then nobles, and now, as it seemed, women were to follow. Had the faith of Christ, from the beginning, ever known so deadly an enemy?

He went on to bewail the irresolution of Charles:—

"Surely," he exclaimed, "if the Emperor had pronounced against the tyrant, this worse antagonist of God than the Turk, he would have found God more favourable to him in the de-

¹ PHILIPS'S *Life of Pole*. Four letters of Cardinal Alexander Farnese to Paul III.: *Epist. Reg. Pol.* vol. ii. p. 281, etc.

² One of these, for instance, writes to him: "Vale amplissime Pole quem si in meis auguriis aliquid veri est adhuc Regem Angliæ videbimus." His answer may acquit him of vulgar selfishness; "I know not where you found your augury. If you can divine the future, divine only what I am to suffer for my country, or for the Church of God, which is in my country."

εἰς αἰῶνος ἀριστος ἀμύνεσθαι περὶ πατρὸς.

For me, the heavier the load of my affliction for God and the Church, the higher do I mount upon the ladder of felicity."—*Epist. Reg. Pol.* vol. iii. pp. 37-39.

fence of his own empire. I the more dread some judgment upon Cæsar, for that I thought him chosen as a special instrument to do God's work in this matter. God, as we see in the Scriptures, was wont to stir up adversaries against those whom he desired to punish; and when I saw that enemy of all good in his decline into impiety commencing with an attack on Cæsar's honour and Cæsar's family, what could I think but that, as Cæsar's piety was known to all men, so God was in this manner influencing him to avenge the Church's wrongs with his own? Now we must fear for Cæsar himself. Other princes are ready in God's cause. He in whom all our hopes were centered is not ready. I have no consolation, save it be my faith in God and in Providence. To Him who alone can save let us offer our prayers, and await his will in patience."¹

A gleam of pageantry shoots suddenly across the sky. Pole delighted to picture his countrymen to himself cowering in terror before a cruel tyrant mourning their ruined faith and murdered nobility. The impression was known to have contributed so largely to the hopes of the Catholics abroad, that the opportunity was taken to display publicly the real disposition of the nation. All England had been under arms in expectation of invasion; before the martial humour died away, the delight of the English in splendid shows was in-

¹ *Epist. Reg. Pol.* vol. ii. p. 191, etc. The disappointment of the Roman ecclesiastics led them so far as to anticipate a complete apostacy on the part of Charles. The fears of Cardinal Contarini make the hopes so often expressed by Henry appear less unreasonable, that Charles might eventually imitate the English example. On the 8th of July, 1539, Contarini writes to Pole:—

"De rebus Germaniæ audio quod molestissime tuli, indictum videlicet esse conventum Norimburgensem ad Kal. Octobris pro rebus Ecclesiæ componendis, ubi sunt conventuri oratores Cæsaris et Regis Christianissimi; sex autem pro parte Lutheranorum et totidem pro partibus Catholicorum, de rebus Fidei disputaturi; et hoc fieri ex decreto superiorum mensium Conventûs Francford; in quo nulla mentio fit, nec de Pontifice, nec de aliquo qui pro sede Apostolicâ interveniret. Vides credo quo ista tendunt. Utinam ego decipiar; sed hoc prorsus judico; etsi præsentibus omnibus conatibus regis Angliæ maxime sit obstandum, tamen non hunc esse qui maxime sedi Apostolicæ possit nocere; ego illum timeo quem Cato ille in Republicâ Romanâ maxime timebat, qui sobrius accedit ad illam evertendam; vel potius illos timeo (nec enim unus est hoc tempore) et nisi istis privatis conventibus cito obviam eatur, ut non brevi major scissura in ecclesiâ cum majori detrimento autoritatis sedis Apostolicæ oriatur, quam multis sæculis fuerit visa, non possum non maxime timere. Scripsit ad me his de rebus primus nuncius ex Hispaniâ; et postea certiora de lisdem ex Reverendissimo et Illustrissimo Farnesio cum huc transiret cognovi cui sententiam meam de toto periculo exposui. Ego certe talem nunc video Ecclesiæ statum, ut si unquam dixi ullâ in causâ cum Isaiâ, mitte me, nunc potius si rogarer dicerem cum Mose, Dominus mitte quem missurus es."—*Epist. Reg. Pol.* vol. ii. p. 158.

dulged with a military spectacle. On the 8th of May a review was held of the musters of the city of London.

"The King's Grace," says a contemporary record, "who never ceased to take pains for the advancement of the commonwealth, was informed by his trusty friends how that the cankered and venomous serpent Paul, Bishop of Rome, and the archtraitor Reginald Pole, had moved and stirred the potentates of Christendom to invade the realm of England with mortal war, and exterminate and destroy the whole nation with fire and sword."

The king, therefore, in his own person, "had taken painful and laborious journeys towards the sea coast," to prevent the invasion of his enemies; he had fortified all the coasts both of England and Wales; he had "set his navy in readiness at Portsmouth," "in all things furnished for the wars." The people had been called under arms, and the "harness viewed," in all counties in the realm; and the Lord Mayor of London was instructed by the Lord Thomas Cromwell that the King's Majesty "of his most gentle nature" would take the pains to see "his loving and benevolent subjects muster in order before his Excellent Highness."

The mayor and his brethren "determined, after long consultation," "that no alien, though he were a denizen, should muster," but only native-born English; and "for especial considerations, they thought it not convenient" that all their able-bodied men should be absent from the City at once. They would have but a picked number; "such as were able persons, and had white harness and white coats, bows, arrows, bills, or poleaxes, and none other except such as bare morris pikes or handguns;" the whole to be "in white hosen and cleanly shod."

"And when it was known," says the record, "that the king himself would see the muster, to see how gladly every man prepared him, what desire every man had to do his prince service, it was a joyful sight to behold of every Englishman."

White was the City uniform. The lord mayor and the aldermen rode in white armour, with light coats of black velvet, and the arms of London embroidered on them. Massive gold chains hung on their breasts. Their caps were of velvet with plumes; and steel battle-axes were slung at their side. Every alderman was attended by a body-guard, in white silk, with gilded halberds. The richer citizens were in white silk also, "with broaches and owches," and "breastplates studded with silver." The remainder had white coats of cotton, worked into

a uniform, with the City arms, white shoes, and long woven, closely-fitting hose; "every man with a sword and dagger," besides his special arms. The whole number to be reviewed were fifteen thousand men, divided into battles or battalions of five thousand each. The aldermen were at the head each of his ward. The wards were in companies of archers, pikemen, musketeers, and artillery. A preliminary review was held on the evening of the 7th of May. The next morning, before six o'clock, "all the fields from Whitechapel to Mile-end, from Bethnal-green to Radcliffe and Stepney, were covered with men in bright harness, with glistening weapons." "The battle of pikes, when they stood still, seemed a great wood."

At eight o'clock the advance began to move, each division being attended by a hundred and twenty outriders, to keep stragglers into line. First came thirteen fieldpieces, "with powder and stones in carts," followed by the banners of the City, the musketeers, "five in a rank, every rank five foot from another, and every shoulder even with his fellows;" and next them the archers, five in a rank also, "and between every man his bow's length."

After the archers came "the pikemen," and then "the bill-men;" the five companies with their officers on horseback, their colours, and their separate bands.

The other divisions were preceded by an equal number of cannon. At the rear of the second, the banner of St. George was carried, and the banner of the Prince of Wales. Behind these, "at a convenient distance," the sword-bearer of London, in white damask, "upon a goodly horse, freshly trapped," with the sword of the City, "the scabbard whereof was set full of orient pearl." Here, too, came the splendid cavalcade of Sir William Foreman, the lord mayor, with himself in person—a blaze of white silk, white satin, gold, crimson, and waving plumes—the choice company of the City; the retinue being composed, for their especial worth and approved valour, of the attorneys, the barristers, their clerks, and the clerks of the courts of law, with white silk over their armour, and chains, and clasps.

The first battalion entered the City at Aldgate, before nine o'clock, and "so passed through the streets in good order, after a warlike fashion, till they came to Westminster." Here, in front of the palace, the king was standing on a platform, "with the nobility." As the troops passed by, they fired volleys of musketry; the heavy guns were manœuvred, and "shot off

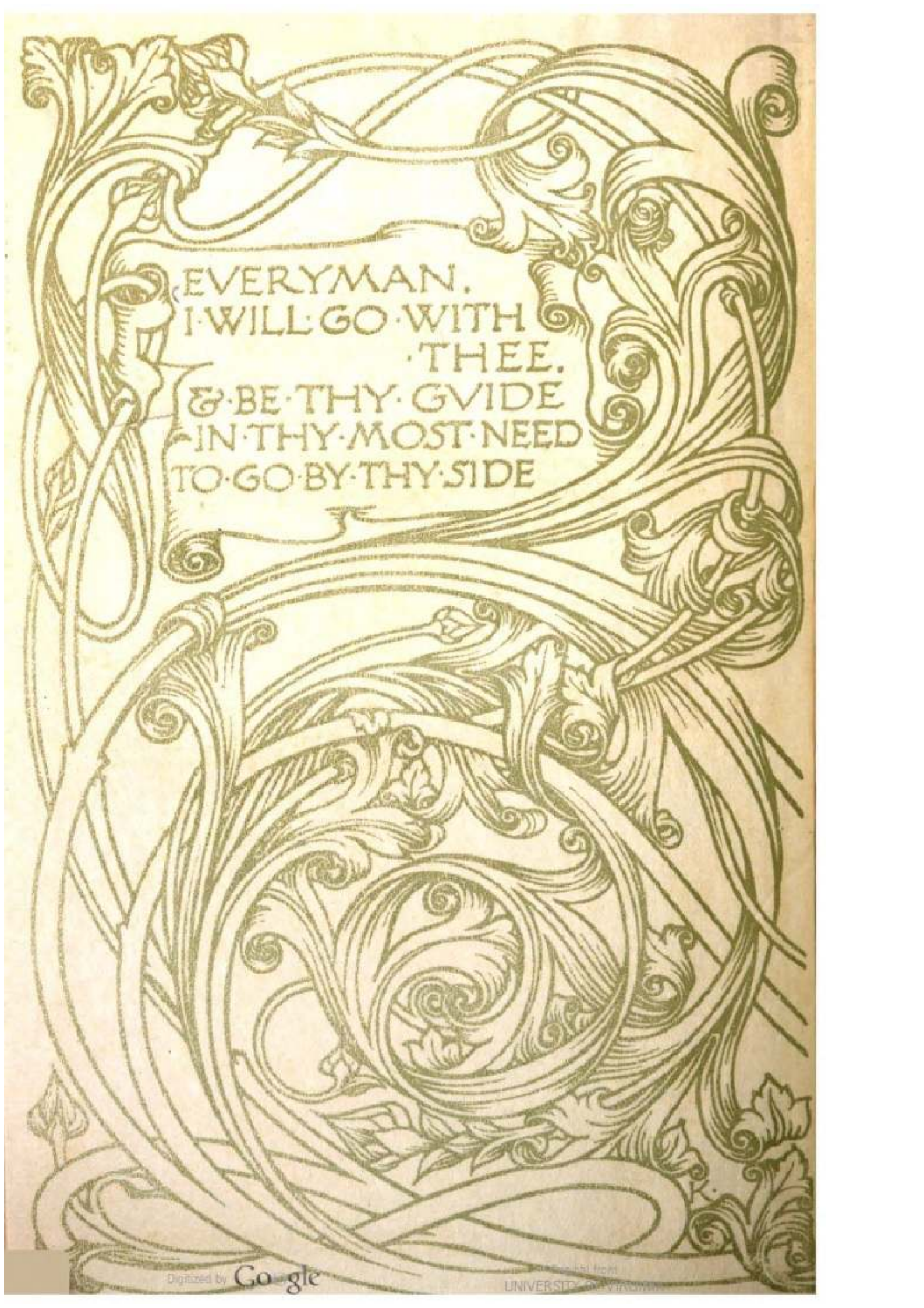
very terribly;" "and so all three battles, in the order afore rehearsed, one after another, passed through the great Sanctuary at Westminster, and so about the park at St. James's, into a great field before the same place, where the king, standing in his gate-house at Westminster, might both see them that came forward and also them that were passed before. Thence from St. James's fields the whole army passed through Holborn, and so into Cheap, and at Leaden Hall severed and departed: and the last alderman came into Cheap about five of the clock; so that from nine of the clock in the forenoon till five at afternoon this muster was not ended."

"To see how full of lords, ladies, and gentlemen," continues the authority, "the windows in every street were, and how the streets of the City were replenished with people, many men would have thought that they that had mustered had rather been strangers than citizens, considering that the streets everywhere were full of people; which was to strangers a great marvel.

"Whatsoever was done, and whatsoever pains was taken, all was to the citizens a great gladness; as to them also which with heart and mind would serve their sovereign lord King Henry the Eighth, whose High Majesty, with his noble infant Prince Edward, they daily pray unto God Almighty long to preserve in health, honour, and prosperity." ¹

¹ Account of the Muster of the Citizens of London in the thirty-first Year of the Reign of King Henry VIII., communicated (for the *Archæologia*), from the Records of the Corporation of London, by Thomas Lott, Esq.

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